



# WASHINGTON UPDATE

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### **Legislative Action Freezes to a Halt**

The Washington, DC region is still digging out from the historic snowfall it witnessed over the weekend. In the interest of safety, the federal government has been closed since noon last Friday. Countless hearings and events have been postponed, further contracting what is already expected to be a [tight couple of months](#) for policy making before Members of Congress head home to the campaign trails later this year. The challenging 2016 calendar coupled with new reports on the [state of the federal deficit](#) promise to further complicate the already complicated and contentious annual appropriations process. If history is any indication, especially in an election year, we recommend that you sit tight and prepare yourself for what is likely to be long road to final FY 2017 appropriations, perhaps not culminating until after the November elections.

## **CONGRESSIONAL NEWS**

### **Senate HELP Committee Begins Consideration of Companion Legislation to the House *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act***

Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP)

Committee, recently announced that the committee will hold the first of three executive sessions to consider legislation to address biomedical innovation. The legislation affects the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The bills would serve as the companion legislation to the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act* passed by the House last summer (see Update, [July 14, 2015](#)). The executive sessions are planned for February 9, March 9, and April 6. Alexander stressed that the Committee worked throughout 2015 to produce the bills that are now ready for the full committee to consider, emphasizing the urgency required by the Senate to "finish its work and turn into law these ideas."

Alexander specifically highlighted the committee's work on legislation "to achieve interoperability of electronic health records" (EHRs). The Committee recently released a [discussion draft](#) of legislation along with a [summary](#) addressing health information technology (HIT), including EHRs, and is seeking comments. The discussion draft includes provisions to assist doctors and hospitals in improving quality of care for patients, establish Transparent Ratings on Usability and Security to Transform Information Technology (TRUST IT), provide the authority to investigate and establish deterrents to information blocking practices that interfere with appropriate sharing, foster a "network of networks" including establishing "an initial set of common data elements," ensure that registries are certified to transmit and receive from certified HIT, provide "certification and development of patient-centered health record technology so that patients can access their health information through secure and user-friendly software, which may update automatically," secure EHRs, and direct the Governmental Accountability Office (GAO) "to review methods for securely matching patient records to the correct patient."

According to the Chairman, at least seven "bipartisan bills" are expected to be considered at the February session:

- Bipartisan HELP Committee legislation to improve Electronic Health Records;
- The FDA Device Accountability Act of 2015 ([S. 1622](#)): Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Al Franken (D-MN);
- The Advancing Targeted Therapies for Rare Diseases Act of 2015 ([S. 2030](#)): Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Burr (R-NC), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Orin Hatch (R-UT);
- The Advancing Research for Neurological Diseases Act of 2015 ([S. 849](#)): Senators Johnny Isakson (R-GA), and Christopher Murphy (D-CT);
- The Next Generation Researchers Act ([S. 2014](#)): Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Susan Collins (R-ME);
- The Enhancing the Stature and Visibility of Medical Rehabilitation Research at the NIH Act ([S. 800](#)): Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Orin Hatch (R-UT), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), and Susan Collins (R-ME); and
- Legislation regarding FDA regulation of duodenoscopes

[Read on](#) for more details.

## FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION NEWS

### NIH Highlights FY 2016 Legislative Mandates in Effect for the Agency

Included in the fiscal year (FY) 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 ([P.L. 114-113](#)) signed into law by President Obama on December 18, 2015 are a number of legislative mandates prohibiting the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from using appropriated FY 2016 funding to

support certain research areas (see Update, [December 18, 2015](#)). A number of the mandates are a continuation of previous statutory limitations on the agency's funding and include the areas of gun control, anti-lobbying, restrictions and exceptions to restrictions on abortion, pornography on computer networks, needle distribution, dissemination of false or misleading information, and human embryo research. For more information, see the NIH notice, [NOT-OD-16-044](#).

## **NSF Director Thanks Community for Support in FY 2016**

In her most recent [newsletter](#), National Science Foundation (NSF) Director France Córdova reviewed the final funding outlook for NSF for fiscal year (FY) 2016 and thanked NSF advocates for their support in combating attempts to place restrictions on the agency's funding: "Your strong support of NSF during this last year reinforced the importance of NSF's mission to the nation and ensured that science, and scientists, will continue to drive where we fund research. With your help, language regarding directorate-specific allocations was not included in the final Consolidated Appropriations Act."

## **NIH Office of Disease Prevention to Create an Electronic Directory of Prevention Experts**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Disease Prevention (ODP), the lead NIH office "responsible for assessing, facilitating, and stimulating research in disease prevention and health promotion and disseminating the results of this research to improve public health," is launching an initiative to enhance the scientific rigor of NIH-funded research projects. ODP is seeking the assistance of the extramural research community in "developing a database of experts in research methods relevant to prevention research that can help Scientific Review Officers (SROs) identify reviewers for NIH grant applications."

Prospective experts are asked to complete ODP's [Prevention Research Expertise Survey](#) which will create an "electronic directory," including information about their scientific and grant review expertise. The directory will aid SROs in identifying appropriate individuals to serve on review committees, matching "the most qualified reviewers to specific grant applications." The information provided by respondents will not be shared with any organization or individual outside the federal government.

## **National Advisory Dental and Craniofacial Research Council Approves Concept Clearances**

The National Advisory Dental and Craniofacial Research Council (NADCRC), the advisory body to the National Institute on Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), held an abbreviated session of its first quarter congressionally-mandated advisory council meeting to accommodate the East coast blizzard. The shortened session included a discussion of proposed research concept clearances to allow the Institute's program staff to move forward to develop funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) around creation of a mentored translation program and an implementation science and oral health program.

[Read on](#) for more details.

## **America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2015**

The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, a working group of 23 Federal

agencies, recently released its annual compendium of indicators, [America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-being, 2015](#). The 17th report in an ongoing series includes 41 key indicators "on important aspect of children's lives" culled from the "most reliable Federal statistics." The easily understood statistics in the report are "objectively based on substantial research." The report also reveals trends over time that are "representative of large segments of the population" and include indicators seven domains: "family and social environment, economic circumstances, health care, physical environment and safety, behavior, education, and health." The domains are "interrelated and can have synergistic effects on well-being." In addition, the 2015 report includes a special section on *Health Care Quality* among U.S. children and highlights "well-child and well-adolescents visits, preschool vision screenings, asthma management plans, and access to care." *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2015*, continues the Forum's practice of highlighting "critical data gaps and challenges Federal statistical agencies" to address the identified gaps.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- DOD: Minerva Research Initiative ([WHS-AD-FOA-16-01](#))
- Department of Education Office of International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE):
  - ◦ [Fulbright-Hays Group Programs Abroad, Short Term/Long Term](#) (January)
  - ◦ [Fulbright-Hays, Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad](#)(January)
  - ◦ [Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language](#) (April)
  - ◦ [American Overseas Research Centers](#) (May)
- NIH: [Click here for a list of recent funding opportunities.](#)

## EVENTS CALENDAR

- [Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention](#), San Diego, CA, January 28-30, 2016
- [American Psychosomatic Society Annual Scientific Meeting](#), Denver, CO, March 9-12, 2016
- [COSSA Annual Meeting & Social and Behavioral Science Advocacy Day](#), Washington, DC, **March 15-16, 2016**
- [Southwestern Social Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Las Vegas, NV, March 22-27, 2016
- [Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting](#), Chicago, IL, March 23-26, 2016
- [Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting](#), San Francisco, CA, March 28-April 2, 2016
- [Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting](#), Denver, CO, March 29-April 2, 2016
- [Society of Behavioral Medicine Annual Meeting](#), Washington, DC, March 20-April 2, 2016
- [Population Association of America Annual Meeting](#), Washington, DC, March 31-April 2, 2016
- [Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference](#), Seattle, WA, March 31-April 3, 2016
- [Society for Research on Adolescence Biennial Meeting](#), Baltimore, MD, March 31-April 2, 2016
- [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, IL, April 7-April 10, 2016
- [American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting](#), Washington, DC, April 8-April 12, 2016

A list of COSSA members' annual meetings and other events can be found on the COSSA [webpage](#).

COSSA members who have an upcoming event they would like to see listed in the Events Calendar and on our website should send an email to [jmilton@coffa.org](mailto:jmilton@coffa.org).

**COSSA's [2016 Annual Meeting & Advocacy Day](#) will take place on March 15 & 16.  
[Register today!](#)**

## **Consortium of Social Science Associations Members**

### **Governing Associations**

American Anthropological Association  
American Association for Public Opinion Research  
American Economic Association  
American Educational Research Association  
American Political Science Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Criminology  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association  
Association of American Law Schools  
Law and Society Association  
Linguistic Society of America  
Midwest Political Science Association  
National Communication Association  
Population Association of America  
Society for Personality and Social Psychology  
Society for Research in Child Development

### **Membership Organizations**

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences  
American Association of Geographers  
American Evaluation Association  
American Historical Association  
American Psychosomatic Society  
Association for Asian Studies  
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies  
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management  
Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations  
Association of Research Libraries  
Council on Social Work Education  
Economic History Association  
History of Science Society  
Midwest Sociological Society  
National Association of Social Workers  
North American Regional Science Council  
Rural Sociological Society  
Social Science History Association  
Society for Research on Adolescence  
Society for Social Work and Research  
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues  
Society of Behavioral Medicine  
Southern Political Science Association  
Southern Sociological Society  
Southwestern Social Science Association

### **Centers and Institutes**

American Academy of Arts and Sciences  
American Academy of Political and Social Science  
American Council of Learned Societies  
American Institutes for Research  
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences  
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research

### **Colleges and Universities**

Arizona State University  
Boston University  
Brown University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Clark University  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Duke University  
Fielding Graduate University  
George Mason University  
Georgetown University  
Harvard University  
Indiana University  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY  
Johns Hopkins University  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Michigan State University  
New York University  
Northwestern University  
Pennsylvania State University  
Princeton University  
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey  
Stanford University  
Stony Brook University, SUNY  
Texas A&M University  
The George Washington University  
The Ohio State University  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of California, San Diego  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
University of Chicago  
University of Colorado, Boulder  
University of Illinois  
University of Iowa  
University of Maryland  
University of Michigan  
University of Minnesota  
University of Missouri  
University of Nebraska, Lincoln  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
University of Oklahoma  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of South Carolina  
University of Texas, Austin  
University of Texas, San Antonio  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
Virginia Tech  
West Virginia University  
Yale University

Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan  
Institute for Social Science Research,  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst  
Institute for Women's Policy Research  
NORC at the University of Chicago  
Owens Institute for Behavioral Research, University of Georgia  
RTI International  
Social Science Research Council  
Vera Institute of Justice

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*The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research.*

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