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COSSA Washington Update

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STEVEN MURDOCK NOMINATED TO LEAD CENSUS BUREAU

After a lengthy search, President Bush has nominated the official state demographer of Texas, Steven Murdock, as the next director of the Census Bureau. Murdock would replace current Director Louis Kincannon, who tendered his resignation last November. Kincannon reported that after more than 40 years of public service and four years as director, "shifting priorities make it time for me to retire." He agreed to stay on until the confirmation of a successor.

Murdock, who is also Director of the Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research and the Texas State Data Center at The University of Texas at San Antonio, holds the Lutcher Brown Distinguished Chair in Demography and Organizational Studies at the University. He has a Ph.D. in Demography and Sociology from the University of Kentucky and is the author of 12 books and more than 150 articles and technical reports on the implications of current and future demographic and socioeconomic change.

The new Census Director-designate is the recipient of numerous honors and awards. These include the Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Research from Texas A&M University, the Excellence in Research Award from the Rural Sociological Society, and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Department of Sociology at the University of Kentucky. He was named one of the 50 most influential Texans by Texas Business in 1997 and as one of the 25 most influential persons in Texas by Texas Monthly in 2005. He is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, and Phi Eta Epsilon national honor societies.

Murdock is a member several professional associations including the Population Association of America, the Rural Sociological Society, the Southern Sociological Society, the Southern Regional Demographic Association, and the

Southwestern Sociological Society. He told a state publication in 2006 that the key to his professional success is being willing "to tell people not only what they want to hear by also what they don't want to hear." He also quoted George Bernard Shaw that: "The mark of a truly educated man is to be moved deeply by statistics." Murdock needs confirmation by the Senate before he can take over the Bureau.

SENATE LABOR-HHS COMMITTEE REPORTS SPENDING BILL: LOTS OF LANGUAGE ABOUT SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AT NIH

On June 21, the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Subcommittee passed its version of the spending bill providing FY 2008 funding for those programs under its jurisdiction. The Labor-HHS bill is the largest of the non-defense appropriations bill and one of the more controversial. It funds more than 300 programs, spanning three federal agencies and many related agencies.

The bill provided the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** a funding level of \$29.899 billion, an increase of \$1 billion above the FY 2007 funding level and \$1.278 billion more than the President's request. The Committee noted that "when the 5-year effort to double funding for the National Institutes of Health ended in fiscal year 2003, few could have imagined that the agency would be in the position it finds itself today. After 4 years of stagnant budgets, its funding has dropped 8.3 percent in real terms." The Committee also noted that the success rate for research project grants is 21 percent. The Committee underscored that the "impact of this funding squeeze goes far beyond those directly involved in awarding and receiving grants. . . It threatens the pace of biomedical research and could delay cures and treatments that are within reach. And the ripple effect could be felt for decades to come if, as feared, we lose the next generation of scientists to other careers."

The Committee noted that it made an effort to reverse this trend in the FY 2007 joint funding resolution, when it increased NIH funding by "\$570 million" - enough to launch the National Children's Study (NCS) and support 500 additional research grants, and provide additional funding for high-risk grants and young investigators. Rejecting the Administration's proposal to cut the NIH's budget by \$278 million, the Committee notes that the \$1 billion increase will allow the NIH, "for the first time since fiscal year 2005, to plan on increasing the average costs of new grants (by 3 percent) and provide the full 'committed level' for noncompeting grants."

The Committee noted that it "was disappointed that the President's budget once again has proposed to eliminate funding" for the **National Children's Study**. Stressing that it supports full and timely implementation of NCS, the Committee provided the \$110.9 million needed for the second full year of implementation. The Committee emphasized that the funding provided will help expand the number of study centers and study locations across the Nation. NIH is urged to coordinate the involvement of all the relevant Federal partners such that this study is ready for the field by no later than 2008.

Likewise, the Committee fully funded the budget request of \$300 million for transfer to the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**. Another \$91 million is provided for the **NIH Director's 1-year Bridge awards**. For the **NIH Common Fund**, the Senate Committee provided \$531.3 million, a ten percent increase above the FY 2007 funding level of \$438 million. Within the Common fund, \$28.5 million is approved for the **Director's Pioneer Awards**, \$55 million for the **Director's New Innovator Awards** and \$25 million is available to be "awarded using a flexible research authority provision." The Committee stressed that it "strongly endorses the goals of the Common Fund, as articulated in the National Institutes of Health Reform Act of 2006." It recognized the "growing importance of this funding mechanism and in an effort to provide greater transparency, the Committee instituted two changes in the FY 2007 joint funding resolution." These changes included specifying the exact amount appropriated for the Common Fund in bill language, and ending the practice of transferring a certain percentage of each Institute and Center's (ICs) appropriation to the fund.

Addressing the issue of **public or open access**, the Committee included "bill language that would require investigators who are funded by the NIH to submit an electronic version of their final peer-reviewed manuscripts to the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central upon acceptance for publication." Investigators have up to 12 months after the official date of publication to do so, although they are encouraged to do so as soon as is possible. The Committee "highly encourages collaborations with journal publishers that would enable them to deposit manuscripts on behalf of the funded investigator, if all parties agree." The panel directed NIH to "seek and carefully take into account the advice of journal publishers on the implementation of this policy." In particular, the Committee told NIH to ensure that publishers' copyright protections are maintained.

Furthermore, NIH must provide a report by April 1, 2008 on the status of the program, including how many manuscripts have been made publicly available and how many have been deposited but not yet made publicly available.

Below is a sampling of the language pertaining to social and behavioral science in the report accompanying the measure:

Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) -- The Committee is aware that basic and behavioral research is focused on such areas as cognition, perception, emotion, social interaction, and learning have led to important advances and improved treatments for depression, bipolar and other affective disorders, diabetes, compliance on behavior change related to diabetes, heart disease, cancer, obesity, and more effective public health announcements and interventions. In view of the fact that “eight out of the 10 leading causes of death have a significant behavioral component and basic research is the underpinning of advances in behavioral research, the Committee is concerned by the continued lack of focus on scientific leadership at NIH for this important field of science.” It is therefore requested that the Director submit a report to the Committee by December 1, 2007, indicating the scientific leadership structure for this field within the appropriate grant-making Institute. With regards to the gene-environment interactions and health, the Committee also encouraged the OBSSR to work with other ICs to spur progress on understanding the interactions among genetic and environmental factors, especially regarding how they might contribute to health disparities in minority populations.

Bridging the Sciences - The Committee believes the “Bridging the Sciences” demonstration program fulfills a need not met elsewhere in the Federal Government by supporting research at the interface between the biological, behavioral and social sciences with the physical, chemical, mathematical, and computational sciences. The NIH Director is urged to give high priority to the program and to urge active consultation and collaboration with the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies. The Committee noted the importance of compliance with the statutory provisions dealing with appropriate, multidisciplinary peer review panels and the unique type of research envisioned.

Pain Consortium - Noting that it is pleased with the increased activity of the NIH Pain Consortium, the Committee, however, expressed its belief that much more needs to be done to realize the Consortium’s full potential. NIH is urged to convene a conference of outside experts in pain research and care to review the current pain research portfolio at NIH and make recommendations with respects to the gaps in the research that still need to be explored as the end of the congressionally declared Decade of Pain Control and Research approaches. It is also suggested that the Pain Consortium provide a mechanism for ongoing extramural participation and input, such as an advisory committee consisting of outside experts.

National Cancer Institute (NCI) - The Committee noted that it is pleased that NCI has a long history of supporting research on behavioral and sociocultural influences on cancer outcomes and access to care, including support for communications research to ensure that the public receives accurate, easily understood information about the human papillomavirus vaccine, and thus facilitate access for those who need appropriate care.

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) - The Institute is encouraged to work closely with the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to ensure that projects examining depression in heart disease patients, or how treatment of depression may improve adherence to cardiovascular health regimens, are routed to the appropriate Institute and review groups so that this type of research is supported.

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) - The Committee expressed concern regarding a pattern of inconsistent funding at NIDDK on Interstitial Cystitis (IC) and Painful Bladder Syndrome (PBS) research and urged the Institute to make a sustained investment in this area. The Committee also encouraged translational research on IC/PBS that includes pilot therapy testing and early intervention of lifestyle/behavioral changes to prevent or lessen symptoms.

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) - NINDS is recognized for its cooperative efforts in expanding basic and translational research on the processes and mechanisms involved in the experience, expression, and regulation of emotion. The Institute is also commended for its cooperative efforts in producing a searchable database of studies and planning joint efforts to solicit research on enhancing healthy cognitive and emotional function.

National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) - The Committee again expressed its concern that NIGMS does not support basic behavioral research. The Institute's statutory mandate includes basic behavioral research and training and the Committee believes that NIGMS has a scientific mandate in this area because of the clear relevance of fundamental behavioral factors to a variety of diseases and health conditions. To date, the NIGMS has not responded to this concern despite the recommendation of a NIH working group that called for the establishment of such a program, and similar recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine, and others. The Committee expects the NIGMS to support basic behavioral research and training. Conversely, the Committee continues to be pleased with the quality of NIGMS's training programs, particularly those that have a special focus on increasing the number of minority scientists. It encouraged the Institute to seek out innovative partnerships with professional societies and other scientific and educational organizations to recruit and retain minority or disadvantaged students in the research pipeline.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) - The Committee expressed its continued strong support for the broad portfolio of behavioral research at NICHD. This continued strong support extends to the Institute's research on the behavioral and social factors that contribute to childhood obesity. NICHD is applauded for its strong support of demographic research which has resulted in a greater understanding of such topics as family dynamics and immigration. NICHD is encouraged to provide additional resources on research that addresses the future of America's families, including the forces affecting birth rates and family investments in children. The Institute is also encouraged to continue to fund research on effective ways to promote and sustain healthy family formations, particularly for low-income families and families of color. NICHD is urged to actively support opportunities for interdisciplinary research into the complex socioeconomic and biological mechanisms that produce health disparities. NICHD is further encouraged to maintain its level of investment in demographic training and infrastructure support. The Institute is applauded for its continued support of research in early language development, particularly studies that underscore the importance of social interaction as a necessary component for language learning. The Committee encouraged further research to help understand which components of social interaction are critical for language development, and how this knowledge can be used to improve the linguistic skills of those with social impairments.

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) - NIEHS is encouraged by the Committee to maintain its steps toward integrating basic behavioral and social science research in its portfolio. The Institute is also urged to expand partnerships with OBSSR and other institutes to fund research on common interests including gene and environment interactions and health. The Committee noted that it strongly supports the trans-institute effort the NIEHS and the National Human Genome Research Institute to identify the genetic and environmental underpinnings of asthma, diabetes, cancer, and other common illnesses, focusing on the development of innovative technologies for assessing the role that environmental exposures and genetic variation play in the risk of developing disease.

National Institute on Aging (NIA) - NIA is encouraged to continue its program of research on aging and work, including on topics such as improved design of jobs, the workplace, and work schedules to accommodate an aging workforce; potential changes in benefit plans for an aging workforce; and changing attitudes toward work and retirement as the baby boom generation reaches what was once considered the age of retirement. The Institute is commended for participating in the Cognitive and Emotional Health Project in collaboration with NIMH and NINDS, which will support research on maintaining cognitive and emotional health in later life. The Committee urged NIA to sustain its commitment to the Demography of Aging centers program and continue its current support of the economic and demographic components of the Roybal Centers for Applied Gerontology. NIA is also commended for elevating the dialogue surrounding global aging issues by hosting with the Department of State the Summit on Global Aging. Given the positive impact of exercise on many aspects of aging, from improved cognition and decreased depression to fewer falls and fractures, the Committee is very supportive of NIA's taking additional steps in exercise research. The Institute is encouraged to expand its work on the role of stereotypes in functioning of the aging and elderly. The Committee is interested in the social and cultural transformation that is taking place as the population and workforce ages and encouraged additional research on stereotypes that may hinder or otherwise affect how our society manages the transformation.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) -- The Institute is commended for launching an interdisciplinary initiative aimed at understanding the social, behavioral, and psychological factors in discontinuing harmful drinking by young adults. The Committee encouraged NIAAA's efforts to include measurement of quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption in new classification systems of alcohol

problems. The Committee also encouraged the NIAAA to continue to fund research that defines both safe and hazardous levels of alcohol consumption for various segments of the population. Pointing out that the Surgeon General calls for measures to decrease the availability of alcohol to young people, the Committee urged NIAAA to conduct further research on the most effective means of reducing youth access to alcohol and increasing the cost of obtaining it. NIAAA is applauded for its recent research initiatives supporting mechanisms of behavioral change using professional treatment mechanisms. The Committee encouraged the NIAAA to further expand research in this area by stimulating interdisciplinary research that integrates biomedical, psychological and social science perspectives on mechanisms of behavior change.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) - NIDA is encouraged to continue its emphasis on adolescent brain development to better understand how developmental processes and outcomes are affected by drug exposure, the environment and genetics. The Institute is encouraged to continue to work with other agencies to stimulate new research to develop effective strategies and to ensure the timely adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices for the prevention and treatment of co-occurring disorders. NIDA is commended for the success of its Criminal Justice Drug Abuse Treatment Studies program. The Committee encouraged the Institute to continue its support of behavioral research that can further our understanding about the underlying cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors that lead to drug relapses in prisons and how to prevent them. The Committee noted that it understands that drug abuse and addiction continue to fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS and that drug abuse prevention and treatment interventions can be very effective in reducing HIV risk. Research should continue to examine every aspect of HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and addiction, including risk behaviors associated with both injection and non-injection drug abuse; how drugs of abuse alter brain function and impair decision making; and HIV prevention and treatment strategies for diverse groups. Noting that the consequences of drug abuse disproportionately impact minorities, especially African American populations, the Committee encouraged NIDA to conduct more studies in these populations, especially in criminal justice settings and geographic areas where HIV/AIDS rates are high. The Committee also encouraged NIDA to continue its focus on the interplay between genes, environment, and social factors and their relevance to drug abuse and addiction. In particular, the Committee applauded NIDA's involvement in last year's "social neuroscience" request for applications and this year's "genes, environment, and development initiative" request for applications.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) - NIMH is urged to put a higher priority on the study of basic behavioral functions such as cognition, emotion, decision-making, and motivation, and to maintain its support for research on the promotion of mental health and the study of basic psychological factors that influence behavior. The Institute is urged to place a stronger emphasis on research on adults over age 65 to reflect the growth in numbers in this population. The Committee requested that the Institute provide data in the fiscal year 2009 congressional budget justifications on the amount of NIMH funding directed toward geriatric mental health research over the past five years. The Committee expressed that it is pleased that emerging field of social neuroscience is among NIMH's priorities. Likewise, the Committee is pleased that NIMH is supporting two developing centers for interventions to prevent suicide.

Significant Increase for Education Research

Within the Education account of the bill, the Senate panel strongly endorsed the work of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), providing it a \$20 million increase for its research, development and dissemination activities, bringing funding to \$182.6 million for FY 2008. The increase is "to accelerate research and development of programs that can help State and local school districts meet the goals of No Child Left Behind (NCLB)." The Committee noted that NCLB called for the doubling the research budget at IES. The Committee strongly supports the Department of Education's efforts "to carry out congressional authorized evaluation of Federal education programs using rigorous methodologies, particularly random assignment, that are capable of producing scientifically valid knowledge regarding which program activities are effective." These evaluations should be independent of the program office and include scientific peer review, the panel also stated in the report.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) received \$95 million, a \$5 million boost over FY 2007, but \$24 million below the President's request. The Statewide Data Systems program received \$58 million, more than double FY 2007 funding of \$24.6 million and almost \$9 million more than the request. For Assessment, the panel allocated \$104.8 million, again providing a boost over FY 2007 of \$11.7 million, but not as much as the Administration proposed; \$116.6 million. Although the panel supported the implementation of the 2009 12th Grade state-level assessments, it did not provide the full requested amount.

The Committee level funded the International Education and Foreign Language programs at \$105.8 million. The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) received \$81.3 million for FY 2008 reflecting the return of earmarks to the legislation, as this reflects a \$59.4 million increase over the FY 2007 appropriation, which did not include specific projects directed by Congress. The Comprehensive Program is fully-funded at the \$15.2 million requested level.

The Javits Fellowship Program received \$9.7 million, same as last year. Unlike the House Subcommittee, the Senate did not provide funding for the Thurgood Marshall Legal Opportunity Program, despite its reauthorization by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (see below).

The Senate Committee recommended \$560 million for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Again, it provided an increase, about \$12 million, but not as much as proposed, which was \$574.4 million.

The House Appropriations Committee is tentatively scheduled to consider its version of the bill the week of July 9. When the Senate bill will reach the floor is uncertain, but it will not be before mid-July at the earliest.

SENATE PANEL ALLOCATES HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDS: HUMAN FACTORS CUT, UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS STAGNANT

On June 14, the Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired by Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) confirmed the FY 2008 funding recommendations made two days earlier of its Homeland Security Subcommittee, also led by Byrd.

The bill provides a total of \$37.623 billion for the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) programs and operations, a \$2.8 billion increase over the FY 2007 level. The House provided \$37.439 billion. The Administration has threatened a veto because of the increased spending.

The Senate panel provided \$838 million for the Science and Technology directorate, a \$45 million decrease from the FY 2007 appropriation, and close to \$40 million more than the Administration requested. Within the \$838 million, \$697.4 million is for Research, Development, Acquisition and Operations. The newly created Human Factors division received \$6.7 million, \$100,000 less than FY 2007 and considerably below the requested \$12.6 million. This recommendation comes despite the Committee report's language noting "the importance of using behavioral and social sciences to detect, analyze, and better understand and prevent threats posed by terrorists, and commends the Department for elevating the status of behavioral science with the establishment of a new Human Factors Division."

For University Programs, which include the Centers of Excellence and the fellows and scholars programs, the Senate committee recommended \$38.72 million, almost \$10 million less than FY 2007's \$48.6 million, and slightly more than the requested \$38.7 million. The problem here is that DHS plans to award four new Centers and without the increased funding the current Centers will see their funds diminish significantly. In the report language, however, the Committee "encourages continued and increased support for the competitively awarded University Programs' Scholars and Fellows program, which is critical to the development of the next generation of homeland security scientists."

On June 15, after many delays due to a partisan dispute over how to handle earmarks in the FY 2008 appropriation bills, the House by a vote of 268-150 passed its version of the DHS spending bill. (For more information about the House bill see Update, [June 11, 2007](#)). The DHS spending bill should reach the Senate floor after the July 4th recess.

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS HIGHER EDUCATION REAUTHORIZATION

After many starts and stops over the past few years, Congress has again started to make progress toward reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA). On June 20, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, chaired by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) reported out the latest version of the legislation.

Although most of the bill deals with the various student aid programs, such as Pell Grants and the loan programs, the bill also includes provisions affecting international education and foreign language programs (Title VI) and Graduate Education programs (Title VII).

During the reauthorization discussions of the past few years, Title VI has come under attack for alleged anti-American bias in some of its Centers, particularly those focusing on the Middle East. Despite a recent National Academy of Sciences' report (see Update, [April 2, 2007](#)) that suggested this was not a problem, opponents of the Title VI centers continued to press Congress for some remedy. The Senate Committee solution was to add the following language regarding the application process for the Centers: the "application must include an explanation of how the activities funded by the grant will reflect diverse perspectives and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs. Each application must describe how the applicant will address disputes regarding whether activities funded under the application reflect diverse perspectives and a wide range of views. Each application must also include a description of how the applicant will encourage government service in areas of national need, as identified by the Secretary, as well as in needs in the education, business and nonprofit sectors." Unlike an earlier version considered in a previous Congress by the House, the legislation does not include any oversight Board with independent powers to oversee these Title VI Centers (see Update, [October 6, 2003](#), [August 8, 2005](#)).

The legislation also asks the Secretary of Education to assist grantees in developing a survey to administer to students who have participated in programs under Title VI to determine post-graduation placement. All grantees, where applicable, shall administer this survey not less often than annually and report the data to the Secretary.

With regard to "critical foreign languages," the Secretary of Education must consult with and receive recommendations about national need for expertise in foreign languages and world regions from the head officials of a wide range of federal agencies. The agencies must provide to the Secretary information regarding how they utilize the expertise and resources provided by Title VI grantees. The Secretary must take into account the recommendations and information when requesting applications, and provide to the applicants a list of the areas of national need.

For the Title VII graduate student support programs, the Committee reauthorizes the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship program that funds postsecondary support for those students studying for advanced degrees in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. The legislation also includes provisions to expand eligibility for the Thurgood Marshall Legal Opportunity Program to include secondary as well as post-secondary students. It would allow national and state bar associations to be eligible as subgrant recipients. The bill also expands the eligible uses for funds to include admission to law practice, such as bar review courses, and preparation of eligible students for completion of a B.A. degree. The grant funds for the program would be authorized by the Secretary of Education and dispersed to eligible law school students.

The Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) has a comprehensive competitive grant program that in recent years has played second fiddle to congressional earmarks that have expanded the budget, but directed the spending to specific projects. In the new HEA legislation, the Committee carries this process to the authorization bill. It includes the creation of a new grant program that would provide support for programs aimed at at-risk students. The program would seek to improve high school graduation rates, college attendance, and college graduation rates. The Act calls for the grant to go to Project GRAD, a nonprofit educational organization begun by the Tenneco Corporation in 1988 and now in 12 sites across the country.

The Committee also calls more FIPSE attention to reforms in remedial education, including English language instruction, and individualized remedial courses. It also calls for the creation of a Center for Best Practices that would be based at a university and would support programs aimed at single parents pursuing higher education.

When the Committee bill will reach the Senate floor is uncertain. The House hopes to move its bill sometime soon.

JOINT ECONOMIC PANEL LOOKS AT WORK-FAMILY POLICIES

On June 14, the Joint Economic Committee (JEC) held a hearing on "Importing Success: Why Work-Family Policies from Abroad Make Economic Sense for the U.S." Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Vice Chair of the JEC, said this is

the first of many hearings that the panel will hold to “develop workplace standards for the 21st Century,” that will help families balance the demands of both work and family.

Kay Brown, Acting Government Accountability Office (GAO) Director for Education, Workforce, and Income Security Issues, testified at the hearing on GAO’s recent report on “Women and Low Skilled Workers.” She reported that women, who have a guaranteed leave period and their job held for them upon their return, come back to the workforce much quicker than women who don’t have those assurances. She also stated that childcare is a significant factor affecting how long women stay out of the workforce. When childcare is not subsidized, women tend to delay their return to work, the GAO reported.

Janet Gornick, Professor at Baruch College, City University of New York, and the Director of the Luxembourg Income Study, testified that American parents tend to work longer and suffer from more family stress. Her findings drawn from her book *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*, show that American parents fair worse than their Western European counterparts. Americans spend significantly more time at work than their counterparts in the United Kingdom (UK), slightly more than Canadian workers, and even more than the stereotypical hard-working Japanese.

According to her study, U.S. businesses also lag behind the amount of paid time off given to employees. Currently the European Union requires that member countries guarantee all workers at least 20 paid days off each year, and both Canada and Japan give their workers two paid weeks off. The U.S. however, has no universal policy on paid leave and does not provide any worker time off guarantees.

Despite talk from both the Republicans and Democrats on the importance of family, there is no national policy on allowing mothers or fathers to take off for the birth or adoption of a child and still receive their full wages. In contrast, the UK allows five weeks of leave and Canada allows for 28. Due to our lack of a national policy many parents are forced to choose between work and their children. As the children grow older parents are again forced to make costly decisions regarding their care. Whereas most European children aged three to five are in public pre-school programs, only 53 percent of American children are in public programs and most of those are five-year olds in Kindergarten.

“What had surprised me was learning of kids who drag themselves to school sick to keep a parent from losing pay or getting fired,” testified Ellen Bravo, coordinator, of the Multi-State Working Families Consortium. According to Bravo, social class and rank within an organization were important factors in determining what benefits you may receive, both explicit and implicit. Whereas a corporate lawyer has the privacy of her office to breastfeed or use a lactation pump, workers in retail or restaurants or lower down the chain have no such options.

Witnesses suggested that although the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was a step in the right direction, it is still insufficient. By only applying to firms with 50 or more employees and only to those employees who work more than 25 hours per week and have at least a year on the job, FMLA only covers approximately 60 percent of all employees. And since the leave is unpaid, FMLA is impractical for a large number of workers. Rep. Jim Saxton (R-NJ) stated that although America needs to be concerned with our low birth rate and should encourage families to have children, we must be practical regarding the incentives we provide.

Speaking as the lone male presence in a hostile feminist crowd, Tim Kane, Director of the Center for International Trade and Economics at the Heritage Foundation, contradicted the other witnesses’ findings and in his view “misguided” ideas. He stated that although some of the ideas calling for changes to wage insurance, flex-time, and mandatory paid leave have some merit, they also have downsides. Many policy solutions offered are really government intrusions into the private sector economy, one of the most prosperous in the world. Kane argued that a large concern for workers should be that any congressionally mandated benefit would come at the expense of their take home pay. Kane declared that “by mandating more benefits in new labor regulations, Congress will be basically giving American workers a pay cut.”

Disagreeing with Kane, the majority of the panelists agreed that American policies are failing working families and their children. Gornick argued that generous work and family benefits would be good for the economy, despite views to the contrary that it would lead to high unemployment. She insisted that generous work family polices are compatible with good economic outcomes. This, she claimed, is demonstrated by the fact that the six top ranked countries in GDP-per-hour-worked are European countries with comprehensive work family polices. The U.S ranks eight on this list.

HOUSE PANEL EXAMINES “DISCONNECTED YOUTH”

On Tuesday, June 19, the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, chaired by Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA) held a hearing on “Disconnected and Disadvantaged Youth.” Definitions of disconnected youth vary by age and other criteria, but the strictest definition is a person between 16 and 24 years old, who is neither in school nor working. In 2005, an estimated 2.3 million kids and young adults fell into this category. While the majority (58 percent) of these youth are white, studies show that blacks and native-born Hispanics are more likely to become disconnected than other adolescents. McDermott, in calling for this hearing, declared, “we [cannot] stand by as some of them go without the bare essentials of life, starting with a place to call home...We cannot afford to lose the productive talents of millions of our youngest citizens who cannot find a place in the world of school and work.”

Rep. John Yarmuth (D-KY), a witness on the first panel, testified that despite the work of states and non-profit organizations, “we are failing disconnected youth.” He cited the lack of adequate funding, personnel and infrastructure needed to help these children address all their needs and problems. He is working to get the Runaway Homeless Youth Act reauthorized. This Act includes funding for a Transitional Living Program that would teach homeless youth aged 15-18 years old basic life skills, from cooking to finding a job. It would also support a Street Outreach Program that would try to provide assistance to youth still living on the street.

The star of the hearing was singer Jewel. As flashbulbs went off, she testified about the time she spent as a homeless youth. When she was 15 years old, she ended up living in San Diego out of a van she bought with borrowed money. The Grammy Award-winning artist described how she was forced to wash her hair in public bathroom sinks, and how she was “mortified and embarrassed of my condition, and the stigma that was being attached to me.”

Ronald Mincy, a professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work, and a former COSSA Seminar Speaker, testified that for the United States to remain competitive in a global economy, it is crucial that the government act to help disconnected youth reconnect to school and work. He asserted by helping these kids reconnect, the government would end up saving billions of dollars in money spent on welfare, unemployment, and the criminal justice system.

Aside from focusing on what could be done to help disconnected youth, the hearing also discussed improvements in the foster care system. One of the biggest problems foster children face is instability. Children in long-term foster care often experience multiple out of home placements. Dan Lips, educational analyst with the Heritage Foundation, believes a tuition scholarship program for foster children would prove beneficial and help establish stability. He would model such a program after the one created in 2006, by Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano. The program would help eliminate the frequent school transfers and disruption to the learning process that foster children often face. These disruptions to the learning process often lead to disruptions in educational development.

Foster mother Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN) testified that over the last six years her family has cared for over twenty-three teenagers through Minnesota’s PATH Social Services Treatment Foster Care program. She stated that “as a result of these experiences, I believe it is imperative that Congress examine creating a federal school choice program for foster children.” The program would allow foster parents the option to place children in their care in either a public or private school on a long-term basis. Currently, the federal government operates a program for older foster children, the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, which assists young adults to make the transition from foster care to self sufficiency, and provides them with \$5,000 in order to do so. Bachmann believes Congress should extend this benefit program to all foster children so foster parents can make better educational decisions based on the individual needs of the children.

With an estimated 5,000 unaccompanied youth dying each year, which is as many as 13 kids dying every day, as a result of assault, illness, or suicide, McDermott stated “we need to search for a better way to reconnect these youth to what so many of us take for granted.”

IMPLEMENTATION OF NIH REFORM ACT OF 2006 PROGRESSING

On June 8, the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) held its 93rd meeting. Director Elias Zerhouni briefed the Committee on the issues that the agency has focused on since the December 2006 meeting. The areas included implementing the NIH Reform Act of 2006, the creation of a Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers (see story below), and the creation of external and internal working groups to examine peer review.

Zerhouni noted that in addition to the passage of legislation reauthorizing NIH, the Congress voiced its support for the agency with its clear and “unanimous vote” to increase the support to NIH in the Joint Funding Resolution which provided the NIH with an “unexpected” increase of more than \$600 million in funding (see Update, [February 12, 2007](#)). The two events are connected, according to the director.

The NIH Reform Act of 2006, explained Zerhouni, added new tools to maximize the agency’s effectiveness. He commended NIH Deputy Director Raynard Kington for his leadership of an *Ad Hoc* Working Group whose membership includes NIH institutes and centers (ICs) directors and senior leaders in legislation policy, management, communications, extramural and intramural activities, budget, and general counsel. The legislation is a “strong affirmation” of the agency, Zerhouni insisted.

He pointed out that a major issue for the NIH is peer review. Recognizing that the “ecosystem has changed,” he emphasized that while “no system is perfect,” the agency has put the issue at the top of its agenda to not only address the symptoms, but also to address structural issues. The goal of peer review, Zerhouni argued, is to fund the best science by the best scientists with the minimum bureaucratic burden and do it in a way that is most productive for scientists. Publicizing that Antonio Scarpa, director of the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR), is leading the effort, he also highlighted the creation of the Working Groups on Peer Review (see Update, [April 30, 2006](#) and [June 11, 2007](#)).

Zerhouni explained that the result of Congress’ funding the Common Fund is that a one percent increase is available in funding for the individual ICs; prior to Congress’ action the ICs contributed that amount to the Fund. He also highlighted the Congress’ support of the Director’s Innovator Awards with an appropriation of \$40 million and \$91 million for the Director’s Bridge Award (see Update, [March 10, 2007](#)). The Congress further expressed its support for the NIH through the funding of the National Children’s Study (NCS), he explained, noting that he and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development director Duane Alexander held the position that it would not have been a wise move to go ahead with the study unless additional funding was found. The Congress provided the \$58 million in new funds for the study to proceed in FY 2007.

Reporting on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services mark up of the FY 2008 spending bill the previous day, Zerhouni reported that the Congress will continue to directly support the Common Fund provide the resources for the NCS, the Bridge Awards, and the Director’s Innovator Award. He also reported that with regard to Open Access, the bill will require peer-reviewed, NIH-supported research to be submitted to the agency no later than 12 months after publication (see Update, [December 13, 2004](#)).

Zerhouni updated the ACD on the next iteration of the NIH Roadmap known as Roadmap 1.5. Four topics have been chosen on which to move forward: Microbiome, Epigenetics, Protein Capture Tools/Proteome Tools, and Phenotyping Services and Tools. Microbiome and epigenetics have been approved for implementation as five-year programs. For more information see <http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/>.

He concluded his remarks with a discussion of funding and success rates, noting that the community is “very concerned” about this issue. The number of applications that the NIH is receiving is beginning to stabilize and the explosion of grants submitted by the scientific community is flattening. Current projections, based on preliminary data, estimates that the number of applications received in FY 2007 were 45,000. The agency had expected, based on the trend line, an increase of about four-six percent, Zerhouni noted. The estimated success rate for FY 2007 will go up to 22 percent. It was 19.8 percent in FY 2006. Most ICs are somewhere in the 19-23 or 24 percent range, he reported.

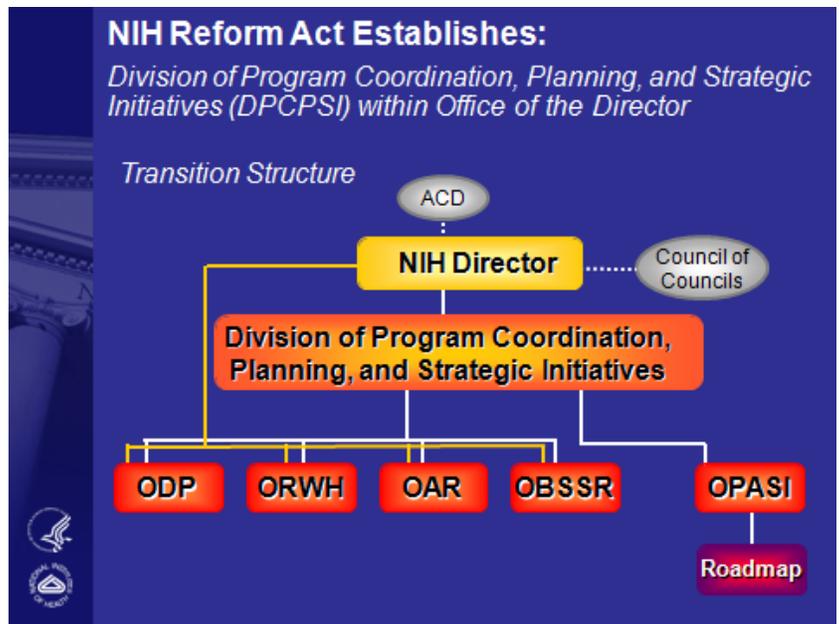
NIH Reform Act

Kington briefed the ACD on the efforts of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group whose charge is to “complete a careful, detailed analysis of the legislation and propose plans for its implementation that will aid NIH in serving the public and [the] scientific community more effectively.” The Working Group’s intention is to finalize its implementation plans by the end of June, 2007. Total implementation of the law will take a year or so, but the Group is setting up time lines and defining what has to be done, he informed the Committee.

Structurally, the biggest change for the NIH is the creation of the *Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI) within the Office of the Director*. Kington explained that in addition to the new division’s duties, the DPCPSI is authorized to identify trans-NIH research for support by the Common Fund/Roadmap. The statute requires that trans-NIH research proposals include “milestones and goals for the research activities,” and give “appropriate consideration to proposals from first-time NIH investigator applicants.” The bill used as a starting point what had already occurred with Roadmap and embedded a formal creation of the Common Fund.

For the NIH, the new law requires a number of reports. It was clear that Congress wanted to receive in a formal way from the NIH how the agency was implementing the legislation, particularly those initiatives funded under the Common Fund, Kington noted.

The NIH Reform Act moves the statutorily created offices (Office Disease Prevention, Office of Research on Women’s Health, the Office of AIDS Research, and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research) into DPCPSI. Kington pointed out that the Offices were formed by Congress to address areas of science that cut across the missions of the ICs. He also emphasized that the statute, “explicitly states that these offices are to retain authorities in effect prior to enactment.” Conceptually, the reason for the move is all of the offices were given explicit missions on how to support an area of research that cuts across the ICs and it made sense to move them within the Division, he explained. The NIH had already created the Office of Portfolio Analysis and Strategic Initiatives (OPASI) which served as a home for a number of activities, including Roadmap, a coordinated sort of home for evaluation, and as a home for developing methods and data techniques for portfolio analysis (see Update, [December 12, 2005](#)). Consequently, OPASI will remain as a transition structure and will house many of the activities explicitly directed for the agency within the creation of this new division.



Kington emphasized that it is important to note that as the Working Group examined the programmatic offices, there are some activities that do not fit within the mission of the new Division; thus, requiring dual reporting by the offices. The Offices will continue to report to the NIH director for those activities. For those activities that it makes sense to integrate within the Division, the directors of these offices will report through the Division director. According to Kington, the idea is that their mission fundamentally connects with the mission of the Division and those activities need to be integrated within it.

With regard to the establishment of the Council of Councils created by the statute, Kington informed the ACD that this entity will have a complementary role to that of the ACD. He emphasized that it is important to have this link for the “pool of funds housed in the Office of the Director.” He reported the agency has begun to form the Council of Councils, which will consist entirely of members from the individual IC Councils. A request for recommendations has gone out to the ICs. The hope, Kington explained, is to have the “appropriate diversity along many dimensions, including diversity among public members versus scientists, as well as different

perspectives.” There is also hope that members will be willing to serve concurrently on the two advisory committees.

The codified Common Fund subsumes the Roadmap for Medical Research Fund, currently 1.7 percent of the NIH’s budget. While there is no formula for growth of the Common Fund as originally proposed, the statute stipulates that the Fund cannot ever drop as a percentage of the NIH budget. When the Fund reaches five percent of the agency’s budget the law requires a review.

Kington noted that a new function for the agency is the creation of the Scientific Management Review Board which would provide oversight of the structure of the NIH. The Board’s mission is to advise the NIH Director and conduct organizational reviews of NIH every seven years. Over the next year, Kington explained that the Board will be put in place and housed within the Office of the Director. The Board duties, however, go beyond looking at structure. Kington explained that the NIH is in the process of thinking through mission, charter, membership, and other issues for the newly created Board.

The Act also requires that the NIH submit a biennial report Congress that will be an assessment of the state of biomedical and behavioral research, along with a detailed description of the research, priorities, and plans of the ICs. It eliminates or subsumes 30 reports in the new biennial report and added 11 additional reports, including one on the Common Fund. The first biennial report is due January 15, 2008. Kington acknowledged that the law mandates “very specific” requirements and “it will be a challenge” to get the report and have it be valuable to the outside constituencies and to the Congress.

He reported that the Working Group is still deciding how to implement the public processes for reorganizing NIH programs required by the law. In addition, the Act established two new demonstration programs: 1) Bridging the Sciences and 2) High risk-High reward. The Group is still thinking through how to implement these programs. The High risk-High reward program, Kington explained, is recognition by the Congress of the challenges in funding high risk research. The agency already has programs in this area but will continue to think more about whether changes are necessary. The bridging the sciences provision addresses how the NIH interfaces with those areas of science that it may be difficult to draw a line directly to a health outcome. He cited nanoscience as an example and pointed out that almost every area of science is thinking about this in various ways. He indicated, however, that some ICs have already uncovered such connections and cited the National Institute of General Medical Sciences as an example.

Kington wrapped up his presentation by highlighting the provision within the NIH Reform Act which requires extramural institutions to report to applicants the length of time to degree completion and the percentage of students that successfully attain doctoral degrees. This is not a trivial requirement, he concluded.

‘BEYOND BIAS AND BARRIERS:’ NIH ACD GETS INTERIM REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN IN BIOMEDICAL CAREERS

Eliminating gender bias in universities requires immediate, overarching reform and decisive action by university administrators, professional societies, government agencies, and Congress, according to the *Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering* report, issued in September 2006, by the National Academies’ Committee on Maximizing the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11741.html>.) The report called for an “urgent broad national effort to maximize the potential of women scientists and engineers in academia.” “Women are capable of contributing more to the nation’s science and engineering research enterprise, but bias and outmoded practices governing academic success impede their progress almost every step of the way,” declared Donna Shalala, president of the University of Miami and former secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and chair of the committee that wrote the report.

Beyond Bias and Barriers found that the “representation of women in leadership positions in our academic institutions, scientific and professional societies, and honorary organizations is low relative to the numbers of women qualified to hold these positions. It is not a lack of talent, but unintentional biases and outmoded institutional structures that are hindering the access and the advancement of women...The time to take action is

now." Support for the study was provided by the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), the National Science Foundation (NSF), Eli Lilly and Co., the Ford Foundation, and the National Academies.

ACD Gets Interim Report

At its June meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the agency provided an interim report of the action that it is taking in an effort to be proactive in responding to the report. NIH Director Elias Zerhouni informed the ACD of the creation of a NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers in January 2007 to examine the issues raised in the report. The Working Group is co-chaired by Zerhouni and Vivian Pinn, director of the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH). Noting that while "the biological sciences have a better profile" compared to other sciences when it comes to the careers of women, Zerhouni acknowledged that there seems to be "structural impediments across-the-board." Pinn expressed her appreciation of Zerhouni's response to the challenge from Shalala who urged him not to let the report be one that sits on the shelf.

In his charge to the Working Group, posted on the website related to women in biomedical careers (<http://womeninscience.nih.gov>) created by the working group, Zerhouni noted that "we are at a transition time in our demographics and in our ability to truly attract the best and the brightest from wherever they come." He also stressed that the Working Group needs to use its insight and creativity and "not be overly concerned with the interpretation of reality;" but to "determine solutions to the gender gap in sciences and engineering and change the reality." He acknowledged that it will not "happen overnight." He encouraged the Working Group "to define what the NIH can do in the short term and determine the obstacles that are amenable to experiments that can inform about how best to proceed in the medium of an the long term."

Pinn informed the ACD that the NIH plans to give attention to the NIH intramural community and the concerns of intramural women scientists, consider the broader context of girls and women in science, and attend to issues of barriers to minority women scientists and mentoring. In addition to examining the Academies' report, the Working Group is also examining the recommendations from the NIH Office of Intramural Research Second Task Force on the Status of NIH Intramural Women Scientists, and those provided by the NIH constituency and community. Other background information came from the Association of American Medical Colleges and associations representing such disciplines as nursing, veterinary medicine, chemistry, among others, as well as the National Science Foundation's ADVANCE (Increasing the Participation and Advancement of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Careers) program, and the mentoring programs at AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science), according to Pinn.

She highlighted some of the Working Group's short term accomplishments, including updated information on sex/gender in the NIH extramural biomedical community. The "revisited" data, she explained, was provided to the NAS' Committee for the report. This data included:

- The number of research project grants (RPGs) per principal investigator (PI) is higher for males;
- The gap between male and female success rates on continuing NIH investigator-initiated (R01) grants is narrowing.
- The average female request for RPGs is less than the average male request.
- Females and males both received about the same percentage of their request.

Pinn indicated that an "informal survey" of NIH career development and mentoring programs had been done and currently there are more than 100 institute and center programs, more than 30 Office of the Director programs, and more than 30 trans-NIH programs. She pointed out that one of the good things about this kind of effort is that it brings together information and puts it in one place making it available to those looking for information. "That in itself is an accomplishment," said Pinn. Accordingly, the Working Group provides a link to these programs on its website.

To help it address the issues identified in the report, the Working Group has been expanded and 11 subcommittees have been established to look at the various concerns and topics. This includes a subcommittee looking at the development of a best practices conference March 4 -5, 2008, on the NIH campus, a recommendation from the NAS' report. The conference is designed to "highlight organizations and policies that are successfully addressing the major barriers in the career development of women in biomedical sciences." Topics to be considered include: childcare responsibilities and the need to 'restart the clock,' need for personal

sabbaticals, mentoring, executive and team leadership training, and issues of promotion to senior leadership positions. The expected outcome of the conference is the development of “a list of real or potential ‘best practices’ along with consideration of potential costs that can be adapted or piloted by academic health centers to improve the retention and advancement of women in biomedical careers.” The subcommittee is headed by Barbara Alving, director of the NIH National Center for Research Resources.

Subcommittees two through five are examining the extramural funding mechanisms and policies, including gender equity in NIH funding reviews and committees and demographics of extramural funding applicants. The subcommittee will review federal policies associated with child care, parental leave, extension of time, and availability of temporary replacement help to understand the benefits available under extramural grants. The report’s recommendations will undergo further analyses to determine their impact and possible budgetary effects on NIH and the extramural community. Norika Ruiz Bravo, the NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research chairs the subcommittee.

Research on the efficacy of programs to reduce gender bias is the topic area of a sixth subcommittee. A better understanding of these issues is needed, Pinn emphasized. Approaches are under development to expand support for research on the efficacy of organizational programs designed to reduce gender bias, prejudice, and stereotype threat, and the role of leadership in achieving gender equity (see related story). The subcommittee contacted existing programs to explore their efficacy and the evidence base for such programs. The programs included the Committee on the Advancement of Women, Clare Booth Luce Foundation, NSF ADVANCE, Yale Women’s Faculty Forum, and the University of Wisconsin Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute. Emphasizing that she was not casting aspersions on the programs, Pinn explained that overall, the subcommittee believes after looking at the programs, we have little information on the actual impact of the programs or rigorous assessment of their effect, including how many women exposed to programs such as these see advancement in their careers, are hired, or go to tenure? Led by NIH Deputy Director Raynard Kington, the subcommittee plans to continue its discussions regarding avenues to assess impact of programs to support women researchers and analyze new metrics to abate gender bias in performance evaluations, and the magnitude of the “female tax” and its impact on the careers of women in science.

Pinn also highlighted the work of a seventh subcommittee focused on mentoring, led by Lawrence Tabak, director of the National Institute for Craniofacial and Dental Research. Pinn related that the subcommittee is discussing how to increase the use and utility of current programs and mechanisms that support mentoring in the NIH community and to develop new conferences, programs, or funding mechanisms to support mentoring programs and networks. In the short term, the subcommittee has identified three major challenges related to the mentoring of scientists that may disproportionately affect women during their professional development.

1. The unavailability of trained mentors, including those familiar with issues that are frequently important to and/or disproportionately affect women.
2. The absence of avenues for networking among women scientists that are vital to providing information and support, as well as avoiding “feelings of isolation” and pitfalls.
3. The scarcity of structured programs or training opportunities offering career development for scientists, including those that address issues of concern to women and/or issues that disproportionately affect women.

The subcommittee also acknowledges that particular attention must be paid to the mentoring of women who are members of underrepresented groups at all levels of career development. Mentoring programs under consideration by the subcommittee include a NIH-wide mentoring program for scientists that would address post-doctoral fellows and tenure-track investigators, a NIH-wide Mentorship Forum, and a Mentoring Program for Scientists at grantee institutions. The subcommittee is also discussing mentorship awards, incentives for excellence in mentoring, and flexible work arrangement. Pinn acknowledged that there were already a number of programs in place and maybe what the programs needed was to make them formal.

An eighth subcommittee is looking at changing the work culture at NIH and is led by Ruth Kirschstein, Acting Director of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, and Michael Gottsman, NIH Deputy Director for Intramural Research. According to Pinn, the subcommittee will work towards eliminating possible impediments to the recruitment, retention, reentry, and advancement of women scientists in the NIH intramural

research program. Topics under discussion include: mentoring and the need for role models; the need to provide necessary training for professional development, the need to change the NIH work culture to enhance flexibility, need to enhance availability and child/family care options, and the need to develop better recruitment strategies.

The other subcommittees created include: enforcement of Title IX and existing antidiscrimination laws; recruitment, retention, and advancement of women at NIH; and the integration of women into bioengineering fields.

Future direction for the Working Group, said Pinn, include determining legal and policy implications of the recommendations, suggested new programs, and innovative ideas; encouraging all ICs to consider innovative programs; continuing efforts of the Working Groups to develop and implement innovative initiatives; and holding the "Best Practices Workshop."

ADVANCING NOVEL SCIENCE IN WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), led by the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) and 23 of the NIH institutes and centers (ICs), is seeking to promote innovative, interdisciplinary research that will advance new concepts in women's health research and the study of sex/gender differences. ORWH is particularly interested in encouraging extramural investigators to undertake new interdisciplinary research to advance studies on how sex and gender factors affect women's health; however, applications in all areas of women's health and/or sex/gender research are invited to apply.

The scientific basis for the program announcement (PAS-07-381) is based on three main sources:

1. The NIH Research Priorities for Women's Health, reviewed and published annually on the ORWH's website (<http://orwh.od.nih.gov/research/priorities.html>).
2. The report, Agenda for Research on Women's Health for the 21st Century, developed in collaboration with the NIH and extramural scientific and public advocacy communities; and
3. The Institute of Medicine report, "Exploring the Biological Contributions to Human Health, Does Sex Matter?"

According to the announcement, four overarching themes are important for addressing women's health: (1) lifespan, (2) sex/gender determinants, (3) health disparities/differences and diversity, and (4) interdisciplinary research. It is emphasized that basic, clinical and translational research should be considered in addressing priority areas in women's health research. Examples include, but are not limited to: diseases and conditions that affect women, methodological advances, education and career development of women in science, quality of life, and research collaborations and partnerships.

The NIH is especially interested in fostering research in women's health in the high priority areas of prevention and treatment, and the biological and behavioral basis of sex and gender differences. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Research to identify and validate biomarkers, including genetic polymorphisms, of disease risk, pathogenesis, progression, and their applications to disease prevention, early detection and treatment, including the development of novel tools;
- Studies of the effect of biological, behavioral, cultural, social, economic, and environmental factors on susceptibility to, or protection from, disease and response to treatment, such as individualized medicine and subs-set analyses, when appropriate.
- Studies of the impact on health of diet; nutrition, hormones; exercise; weight patterns; toxin exposures, obesity; sex practices; mental health disorders including eating disorders; tobacco, alcohol and drug use or abuse; occupation; violence or trauma. Studies of the factors that are involved in disease initiation

and progression, both biologic and behavioral in order to develop effective preventive and treatment strategies.

Other examples of areas of interest offered as a guide to interested investigators include:

- Effect of biologic and behavioral sex and gender difference on quality of life and quality of care.
- Sex differences in hormonal, psychosocial, and cognitive function.
- Address and compare stages of the life cycle, from intrauterine, to infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, late adulthood and elderly.
- Study issues of females in underserved populations, e.g., rural or inner city residence, homeless, victims of violence, migrant workers.
- Examine the role of race, ethnicity, culture, and socioeconomic class in conditions and disorders that affect women.

Under the program announcement, investigators may request funds to perform secondary data analyses of either their own data sets or other data sets that are publicly available.

Participating NIH institutes, centers and offices, include: Cancer; Eye; Heart, Lung, and Blood; Genome; Aging; Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; Allergy and Infectious Diseases; Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases; Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering; Child Health and Human Development; Deafness and Other Communication Disorders; Dental and Craniofacial; Drug Abuse; Environmental Health Sciences; General Medical Sciences; Mental Health; Neurological Disorders and Stroke; Nursing; Library of Medicine; Fogarty International Center; Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine; Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research; and the Office of Dietary Supplements. For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAS-07-038.html>.

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