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COSSA Washington Update

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SILVER DELIVERS PLENARY SPEECH AT SSSA MEETING



President Harold Bass of Ouchita Baptist University & Silver

COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver presented the plenary address at the recent 88th meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association (SSSA) in Las Vegas, NV. Invited by SSSA President Harold Bass of Ouchita Baptist University, Silver explained the role of the social sciences in U.S. science policy to this oldest multidisciplinary social science organization.

Silver thanked SSSA for their support, having been one of the first organizations (beyond the original ten founding groups) to join COSSA in April 1982. He then briefly reviewed COSSA's history and current activities, including its defense of the social and behavioral sciences against congressional attacks, its appropriations' advocacy, its work with coalitions, its recent retreat on Enhancing Diversity (see other article), and its presentation of the results of social science research to policy makers, including the upcoming briefing on Violent Crime (go to www.cosssa.org for details).

After briefly describing the macro environment of policy making - executive vs. legislative power, budget deficits and the deteriorating economy, the argument over earmarks, the costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, debates over extending the Bush tax cuts - he turned to a discussion of the current drivers of U.S. science policy. Most importantly, he suggested, was the push to enhance funding for the physical sciences and engineering as recommended by the National Academies' report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* and the Bush Administration's American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI). This is causing difficulties, Silver explained, for funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), whose budgets have remained flat in recent years and for the social, behavioral and economic sciences directorate at NSF, where the President's FY 2009 budget recommends an \$18 million increase compared to a \$235 million increase for math and physical sciences research.

This is somewhat frustrating, Silver noted, given the social and behavioral sciences' importance to the many problems facing America and the world where scientific research is an integral part of finding solutions. He pointed to many examples such as: the brain/behavioral interface as we examine the impact of mapping the human genome; the significance of the ethical, legal, and social implications of new technology, including nanoscience; climate change and its human dimensions; the impact of new sources of energy and conservation measures; the development of human capital and the research concerning language and learning, skill formation, the changing workforce, and broadening participation; the acquiring of social capital and its impact on communities, especially in rural America; studies of human and social interactions, including social networks, decision making, particularly under uncertainty, organizational change, public health issues, and creating a fair society; changing demographics with foci on global aging, migration, birth and death rates, immigration, and new family structures; and global issues starting with conflict and cooperation, and including differential economic growth, terrorism, and the compatibility of economic and political freedom.

All these and more, Silver indicated, form an enormous agenda for social and behavioral science research. He then proceeded to demonstrate to the SSSA audience, that these sciences have not received the funding that the agenda suggests are necessary. He noted that there are current U.S. science policy initiatives where these sciences have a role, sometimes leading, more often in a secondary position: the science of science policy, cyber-enabled discovery and innovation; obesity and healthy lifestyles; personalized medicine; gene/environment interactions; the National Children's Study; determining the role of research and development spending on the Nation's Gross Domestic Product; and evaluations of government programs with an emphasis on evidenced-based policy.

He ended by re-emphasizing why the social and behavioral sciences should have enhanced opportunities and funding by citing the late Nobel Prize and National Medal of Science winner Herbert Simon on the importance of the social sciences in providing the "basic fund of knowledge about ourselves and our institutions." To see the full quote go to COSSA's Web Page www.cossa.org.

COSSA ORGANIZES ENHANCING DIVERSITY IN SCIENCE RETREAT

Led by COSSA, on February 28, nine organizations held the disciplinary-wide retreat of professional associations and scientific societies to discuss the role of these organizations in *Enhancing Diversity in Science*. The organizations responsible for conceptualizing and implementing the groundbreaking meeting included: AAAS Center for Careers in Science and Technology, the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Sociological Association (ASA), the American Psychological Association (APA), the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR) and the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD). The National Institutes of Health (NIH) provided the bulk of the funding with additional resources from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The retreat, in part, was a response to the recent number of reports that have documented how increasingly fewer underrepresented minorities are pursuing careers in science, and that the leakages in the science pipeline for minority students and professionals happen at various stages - but especially within higher education. Professional associations and scientific societies represent permanent homes for scientists and students of science, many of whom relocate several times throughout their careers. In addition, associations and societies, as sources of stability for their members, have an opportunity to provide educational and career support that might not otherwise be consistently available. They can work together to develop common approaches to enhancing educational and career opportunities for vulnerable populations, and to help ensure greater participation of underrepresented minorities in science.

The goal of the session was to spawn *collaboration* among associations, societies, federal agencies, and private foundations that has been, in many instances, lacking. The conveners of the retreat believed that collaboration is essential to enhancing recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities in science.

The associations and societies hoped that the meeting would forge new opportunities for these groups to work together, learn from each other, and develop common approaches, where appropriate. In turn, the group effort should enable key areas of progress, such as the development and utilization of outcome measures to assess program effectiveness.

The retreat's agenda focused on: (1) Obstacles and Challenges to the Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Minorities in Science, and (2) Successful Models and Future Initiatives. Shirley M. Malcom (AAAS) kicked off the morning by framing the issue. The morning panel of experts: Arthur L. Coleman (Holland & Knight), Erich D. Jarvis (Duke University), and Andres E Jimenez (University of California) focused on understanding the various obstacles, challenges and opportunities in this area, including those identified in research, in recent court decisions, in the careers of individual scientists, and by university and association leaders. During lunch, NIH Deputy Director Raynard S. Kington provided remarks about the NIH's efforts in this area and introduced the retreat's keynote speaker, Freeman A. Hrabowski, III, President of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The afternoon panel of experts: Wanda E. Ward (NSF), Jeremy M. Berg (National Institute of General Medical Sciences), Ted Greenwood (Alfred P. Sloan Foundation), and Joan Y. Reede (Harvard Medical School) focused on successful models for overcoming obstacles, drawing upon the perspectives of both federal and private funders and program leaders. Mary Ann McCabe (SRCD) shared the key findings of a recent survey of professional associations and scientific societies that indicate what associations are doing now, what goals are being sought, and whether/how outcomes are being measured.

COSSA Executive director Howard Silver welcomed the retreat's participants, noting that "as you all know by your presence, this is an extremely important topic." Silver noted that he had spent the previous two days "up on Capitol Hill at hearings on the budget for the National Science Foundation, and probably 75 to 80 percent of the discussion was based around the notion that China and India were spending significant proportions of their GDP on scientific research and building a scientific workforce." As we know, he continued, China and India have over 1.2 billion people compared to the United States at a little over 300 million people. If you believe that demography is important, and since we're a social science association, we believe demography is important, this creates difficulties for the United States." Therefore, he added, "it's very important that we don't waste any talent we might have. It's imperative to make the idea of enhancing diversity in science work."

'Building a Diverse Talent Pool for Stem: Finding Clarity Amid the Clutter'

Malcom's presentation, entitled, "Building a Diverse Talent Pool for Stem: Finding Clarity Amid the Clutter," started the day by framing the issue in a way that "was sufficiently honest, candid, and that could kind of cut through the noise" so that participants could begin "to get at what was really at the bottom" of the issue. "It is essentially about getting the assumptions right," she noted. The first issue is that we do not have a shortage of scientists in the U.S. and according to economists we probably will not, observing that the much-discussed Harold Salzman (The Urban Institute) paper does "not pertain to underrepresented minorities.



The second issue is many people think that these populations are the United States' "ace in the hole, although they are not necessarily viewed that way," she stressed. Malcom noted that the reality is that the demographics are moving in the direction the United States will soon have a very sizeable proportion of our college age population coming from groups that have not had a strong attachment to science and engineering fields (see Changing Demographics story in this issue). She observed that another concern surrounding the question about diversity is, "what is the value added?" What do we gain by having diverse teams? What do these diverse perspectives allow us to do and accomplish? How do they let us see the world in ways that we can in fact participate in a global community on a much different kind of a plane? "I think that those are the kinds of directions and questions that maybe we need to pursue," she posited.

Another issue is getting the targets right, Malcom stated. She observed that a lot of time has been expended trying to fix the students instead of trying to fix the system, noting that the population of our universities now, including our research universities, are made up of upwards of 62 percent female of all races and minority males. There is also the issue of "finding the high leverage parts of the system." Where do you begin, she asked. A lot of studies have suggested that research participation really helps to clarify and solidify career goals. "So we have an opportunity there," she argued. We also have to begin to understand the points of transition and whether or not there is real clarity among all the people who are in the line of transition about what their roles are and how they can accomplish them. Malcom also noted the possible legal obstacles surrounding these issues. She said that the University of Michigan is owed a debt of gratitude because "were it not for that kind of clarity . . . we would not think we could do anything."

Another focus, Malcolm declared, is getting the strategies right - looking at the research, using data to inform our efforts. "There is such power to being able to really understand where we are losing people, and who we are losing." She cautioned, however, that we also have to be "very concerned about the data" we are beginning to lose. Without

information, we have very little sense of what it is going on. This is one area where professional societies can assist. Societies who collect data can begin to help make sure we have the kind of information we need to define the tasks ahead.

Incentive structures are also important; "What you incentivize is what you get," Malcom observed. Right now there is a lot less emphasis on mentoring and similar activities within our universities because there is not a reward for doing these things. You get rewarded for bringing in grant money and for publishing papers; you are not rewarded for doing right by students in terms of their undergraduate courses. Malcom suggested that this is another role that professional associations and scientific societies can uniquely play.

Noting that she has basically lived in a professional society for 30 years, Malcom maintained that there is "a power to leadership of the professional societies that is absolutely undeniable. You can reset the value structure. You can help to legitimize things that would otherwise be seen as tangential to the work of a chemist or whatever you may happen to be. Societies can provide resources and training." She emphasized that when she says resources she does not mean that you are giving out grants. There are more resources than grants, including setting up mentor programs, connecting people, providing opportunities for networking, providing information on where people can go to get support, and leadership training. Malcom emphasized that these resources also include affecting and informing policies. Finally, we need to recognize and celebrate when people do things right.

Hrabowski: We Have Not, When Thinking About Training, Given the Level of Rigor To the Evaluation That We Do To Science That We Really Care About

President of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Freeman Hrabowski, III, was the retreat's keynote speaker. He is also the chair of a new committee for the National Academies on minorities in science, examining broadening participation, particularly for underrepresented minorities. It is a complement to the NAS' *Beyond Biases and Barriers*' (see [Update, June 25, 2007](#)) committee that focused on women. These committees, Hrabowski explained are the result of congressional action since the publication of *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*. That report "did not speak to the question of under representation." The newly formed committee on minorities' intent is to "add value" and not "simply regurgitate what has already been said."



According to Hrabowski, what he would say about the science enterprise in general is that "we have not, when thinking about training, we have not given the level of rigor to the evaluation that we do to science that we really care about. We still think about the training of people as something that's warm and fuzzy." Accordingly, Hrabowski noted, that when you look at the recommendations, "you will often see we either do not have the data or we cannot analyze it in a way we need to... Those of you in these organizations, I know, appreciate what I am saying."

Hrabowski noted that in 1946, Albert Einstein, in a paper called *The Negro Question*, noted that "a large part of our attitude towards things is conditioned by opinions and emotions which we unconsciously absorbed as children from our environment. In other words, he explained, it is tradition, besides inherited aptitudes and qualities, which makes us what we are. But we rarely reflect how relatively small, compared with the powerful influence of tradition, is the influence of our conscious thought upon our conduct and convictions. Of course, it would be foolish to despise tradition, he acknowledged, "but with our growing self-consciousness and increasing intelligence, we must begin to control tradition and assume a critical attitude toward it if human relations are ever to change for the better. We must try to recognize what in our accepted tradition is damaging to our faded dignity and shape our lives accordingly."

"Setting that context, which says that we make assumptions all the time about how to do this work," Hrabowski noted that the one thing that helps his campus to be successful, is that they are always questioning themselves. What is it that they have not thought about? What assumptions are they making that are not necessarily valid? How should the university rethink how it is doing things? Hrabowski challenged the scientific community to think about that in particular. He related the story of when he was a young vice-provost he was challenged by Ted Greenwood of the Sloan Foundation, who asked some very good questions that "frustrated" him to no end. He acknowledged that the questions were right on the mark because he had not seen an institution, particularly predominantly white institutions, like UMBC, that was successful in producing large numbers of African Americans in particular, or Hispanics, who would go on to get Ph.D.s in science and engineering. He pointed out that he is still "hard pressed" to find it.

According to Hrabowski, Greenwood's questions forced him to go back and ask the hard questions of his campus. What are we going to do? How do we change the culture? How do we get people to understand it's not really the case than only an M.D. is a real doctor?

NIH: Struggles with How to Create a Diverse Workforce

According to NIH Deputy Director Raynard Kington, “one of the issues the NIH continues to think about and struggle with is the exact topic that is the focus of this meeting, how can we assure that we have a diverse scientific workforce.” He observed that perhaps the strongest motivator for “many communities that don’t necessarily have religion on this topic yet is the demographic imperative.” Using Census Bureau data of race and ethnic distribution of 18-year olds in the United States in 2000 which shows that more than 40 percent are non-white and either Hispanic of any race, or African American, or Asian, or other, including mixed races. That pattern over the next 50 years has been a strong motivator for organizations to try to understand what the likely impact of this distribution will have on our scientific workforce in the next generation,” he explained.

Kington presented a “sobering set of statistics” from the NIH that reveals that the percentage of principal investigators of research project grants, or most of the investigator-initiated (R01s), who are African American has not ever topped two percent, and has hovered between 1.3 and 1.8 percent between 2000 and 2006. The numbers are somewhat better for Hispanics, Kington explained, but there are “no strong trends in an upward direction.”

According to Kington, the NIH is attempting to use their data to try to understand what might be driving the patterns the agency sees. He noted that in the middle of the doubling of the NIH budget, there was a significantly lower success rate for African Americans when compared to either white applicants or Hispanic applicants. When stratified by the institutions’ rank in terms of dollars they received from NIH, the disparity actually increases dramatically as you go down that ranking, he pointed out. In 2006, when NIH’s budget was essentially flat, Kington noted that overall the disparity in From the NIH’s examination of where the applications were coming from, Kington noted that the agency found that interestingly enough, African Americans, in particular, were “much more likely” to submit applications from institutions that are at the bottom of the ranking in terms of receiving funding from the NIH. “So we have the combination of institutional effect across institutions, and the disparity increasing as you go down institutional rankings,” he explained.

What the NIH has learned from this, Kington reported, is that perhaps the agency needs to do more analyses of its own records and data to understand some of the patterns it is seeing that might inform how the NIH develop interventions to improve success rates, particularly for underrepresented minorities. He also reported that there are a lot of ongoing activities at NIH addressing “many issues related to the workforce.” He recalled the National Research Council report that specifically assessed the NIH’s training programs. He informed the group that NIH is developing an agency-wide response to those recommendations. He also observed that the agency is also devoting more resources to developing models of understanding the workforce, which he noted has turned out to “be more complicated than initially anticipated.” Kington also noted that the NIH was planning a workshop with FASEB, the AAMC, and the Sloan Foundation, to examine the broad issue of the biomedical research workforce. One area of particular interest, he explained, is how changes in labor market diversity will affect the NIH’s success in achieving the distribution necessary to have a successful scientific funding program.



Like Malcolm, Kington referred to the significant legal challenges that will need addressing. The NIH is devoting more resources to developing the “compelling interest” case. Working with other federal agencies and in the context of demographic shifts, the case can be made, he declared.

Next Steps

The ultimate aim of the retreat is to arrive at new recommendations for action on the part of associations and societies. It was designed to generate a shared commitment to the problem, new opportunities for collaboration across diverse organizations and areas of science, and specific action steps that the associations and societies can carry out to achieve progress. Participants were assigned to one of five breakout groups and asked to consider three themes throughout their discussions: 1) collaboration, 2) policy, and 3) funding.

A report will be generated from the retreat and posted on [COSSA's website](#). In addition, recommendations from the working groups as well as a transcript of the speakers’ presentations will also be posted. The committee members are currently deliberating how it plans to move forward. Individuals interested in being notified when the report is available can send an email message to the [Enhancing Diversity in Science Coalition](#).

FY 2009 BUDGET SEASON STARTS IN EARNEST

While we were away working on the Budget Issue of the newsletter, published on March 10, Congress got to work on the FY 2009 budget. Both the House and Senate passed versions of the budget resolution that will guide appropriators, the appropriations subcommittees held numerous hearings, and discussion continued as to whether Congress would complete the FY 2009 spending bills before the election and whether they would contain earmarked or congressionally-directed funds. Also under consideration is whether the FY 2008 supplemental appropriations bill to continue funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will include funding for domestic programs, including science. In addition, because of their conference committees' failure to reach agreement, Congress extended once again both the Higher Education Act and the provisions of the old Farm Bill. The stories below report on some of this activity.

HOUSE AND SENATE ADOPT FY 2009 BUDGET RESOLUTIONS

Before leaving for the two-week Spring/Easter recess, both the House and Senate completed their first steps in the FY 2009 funding process by passing separate versions of the budget resolution that will provide overall spending guidelines to the appropriators who set the actual dollar amounts for agency and program budgets.

On March 14, the Senate passed its budget resolution 51-44, mostly on party lines. The Senate set overall discretionary spending at \$1.012 trillion, \$21.8 billion above the President's figure. The House version, which passed on March 13 by a vote of 212-207, provided \$1.017 trillion, \$25.5 billion over the Administration's number. These attempts to increase discretionary spending did not work for the FY 2008 budget, as the President refused to move off his overall figure thus forcing Congress to back down on its plans to significantly increase spending for some programs, including the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The Senate rejected a proposed amendment by Sen. Jim DeMint (R-SC) to impose a one-year moratorium on earmarks. Despite backing from the three Senate-based presidential candidates, the amendment failed 29-71. Senators from both parties argued that earmarks are part of Congress' constitutional right to make spending decisions and allowed them to take care of their constituents' needs.

Two other amendments focused on science funding. Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) successfully offered an amendment to provide additional funding resources in FY 2009 "for investments in innovation and education in order to improve the competitiveness of the United States." His provision would provide "room in this budget for the President's requested levels of spending for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and for the Office of Science in the Department of Energy, for science and math education, and for research and development." Sen. Arlen Specter's (R-PA) successful amendment added \$1.2 billion to the Health Function (550) to allow for increased funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The President's budget requested level funding for NIH in FY 2009.

The House budget resolution also includes funding that exceeds the President's budget to "support the goals of the House Leadership's Innovation Agenda and the America COMPETES Act: to put NSF funding on a path toward doubling and to train more qualified science and math teachers." With regard to the Health Function, the House resolution also provides "an increase over both the 2008 level and the President's 2009 request, with a particular focus on NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Occupational Safety & Health Administration."

A House-Senate conference committee hopes to come up with a final version of the Budget Resolution by April 15. Then the appropriations committees can begin their markups of the specific bills. The prospect for an early end to the FY 2009 appropriations process is dim, given the Administration's adamant commitment to its own spending priorities.

NSF FACES FRIENDLY SPENDING SUBCOMMITTEE

On February 27th, the National Science Foundation (NSF) made its annual appearance to defend its budget before the House Commerce, Science, Justice (CJS) Appropriations Subcommittee. Panel chairman, Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-WV) pronounced that even though NSF's proposed FY 2009 budget includes a 13.6 percent increase to \$6.85 billion, it still is "far short of the authorized level" of over \$7 billion. Ranking Member Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) announced that he was "very pleased" with the proposed FY 2009 NSF numbers. However, both cautioned NSF Director Arden Bement and National Science Board Chairman Steven Beering, who were the witnesses at the hearing, that it would be "difficult to provide" the significant proposed increase given competing priorities within the Subcommittee's jurisdiction.

As with most hearings focusing on science in recent years, this one duly noted the National Academies' report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* as well as referencing last year's American COMPETES Act and the Administration's American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI). Members of the Subcommittee continued to express concerns about the U.S. remaining a world leader in science and technology in the face of threats from elsewhere, mostly China. Bement assured them that the U.S. was "still a world leader," while at the same time both he and Beering conveyed their anxiety about the rates of change in scientific investment that might allow China and others to catch the U.S.

The Subcommittee also focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education, again wondering how to get U.S. students to take more science and math courses, to compete better in international tests, and to enter science and engineering careers. Bement referenced NSF's array of STEM programs, and noted a new focus on what he called the "2+2+2 approach." Bement explained that the effort is to align curricula from the junior and senior years in high school, with the first two years of undergraduate education, including community colleges, and then the last two years of four-year colleges and universities. The key, according to Bement, is that expectations for performance match requirements for higher level education.

At the top of the education ladder, Bement also defended the proposed 32 percent increase in NSF's Graduate Fellowship program, which would allow an additional 700 students to receive awards. This is important, Bement noted, because these are the people who in the immediate future "will provide a stimulus to keeping our innovation system strong."

Toward the end of the hearing, Frelinghuysen raised the issue of "imbalances" in the proposed increases for the disciplinary-based directorates. Bement responded by defending the large increases for certain directorates and not for others: "...in setting our budgets, we not only wanted to increase and strengthen all of our disciplines, but we also wanted to pay attention to alignment with the America Competes Act and also the American Competitiveness Initiative."

He added that the "social behavioral sciences are also interconnected with almost all of our advanced technology programs, because all those programs have a human dimension. They have a human element that has to be attended to, and that's especially important in human-machine interactions. How do you adapt humans to machines, and how do you adapt machines to humans? How do you develop virtual organizations? That's a symbiotic relationship, because advanced computer technology enables virtual organizations, but if you don't have the social component of the virtual organization, it's not going to be very effective."

HEALTH RESEARCH AGENCY LEADERS TESTIFY TO HOUSE FUNDING PANEL

On March 5, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, chaired by Rep. David Obey (D-WI), held a combined hearing on health issues and the health research budgets for the Department of Health and Human Services. Appearing before the committee, were directors of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Elias Zerhouni; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Julie Gerberding; Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Carolyn Clancy, and the administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Terry Cline. Below is a composite of their oral and written testimonies.

NIH: Impact of Research Extends Beyond Disease

"Research is the basis of virtually every improvement in health and medicine," testified NIH Director Elias Zerhouni, pointing out that the impact of scientific research, however, extends far beyond disease. He also declared that throughout history, advances in science and technology strengthened the economy, raised the standard of living, enhanced global leadership, and lengthened and improved lives. Zerhouni argued that to sustain these achievements, "the flow of new scientific knowledge must be continuous and substantive. Despite monumental progress, science remains a difficult frontier to explore," he added.

The NIH director emphasized that while the NIH plays a significant role in the extension of life and the prevention and treatment of many diseases, these advances indirectly led to a major rise in the burden of chronic long-term conditions. An estimated 75 percent of today's health care expenditures relate to chronic diseases, including the emergence and consequences of such diseases as obesity, diabetes and Alzheimer's disease. "We must continue our focus on not only *how* we best deliver healthcare, but more importantly, *what* healthcare we deliver," Zerhouni explained to the Subcommittee.

Zerhouni, once again, reiterated that this “dramatic shift” from acute to chronic disease required a change in the strategies for preventing and treating diseases. The NIH’s research strategy needs to alter its approach to “a much more preemptive approach that manages disease over its entire life cycle, from identifying an individual’s susceptibility to a disease, to prevention, early diagnosis, reduction of complications, and smarter therapies,” he added. “More often than not, it is the sustained combination of multiple approaches - from the most basic science to epidemiological and behavioral research - that makes advances in science effective,” he emphasized. He then highlighted the “important public health success story” of tobacco use and related diseases, noting that in “the last decade, overall cancer death rates dropped for the first time in a century, driven largely by the dramatic reduction in male smoking from 47 percent in the 1960s to less than 23 percent today.”

Despite being optimistic about recent discoveries, “there are challenges that lay ahead of us,” Zerhouni insisted. “Efforts to prevent, detect, and treat disease require better understanding of the dynamic complexity of the many biological systems of the human body and their interactions with our environment at several scales - from atoms, molecules, cells and organs, to body and mind,” he maintained. According to the director, one of the agency’s “most pressing challenges is to generate and maintain the trained and creative biomedical workforce necessary to tackle the converging and daunting research questions of this century. He insisted that nurturing a new generation of innovators is critical to the NIH’s future research endeavors. Young people, he argued, “need to see at all stages of the pipeline, that biomedical research is an attractive career. They need to see that there is a stable research enterprise, providing them opportunities to explore their best ideas for improving human health.”

Chairman Obey (D-WI) questioned “Why should the county give a damn” that this year’s freeze of the NIH’s budget means that we will lose about 6,000 scientists? Zerhouni responded that “somehow we have to understand that the capacity of our country to react to both its current problems and its future problems will depend on a trained, committed, talented scientific workforce.” Zerhouni explained that it takes about 20 years to train a scientist and costs about \$100,000; “So that every time we can’t sustain our purchasing power, it really hits the scientists primarily, especially the early-career scientists.”

Obey reflected that he understands the focus on molecular biology and on genetic predisposition to certain diseases, but one “of the principal critiques of medical research in this country on the part of some would be simply that that while we invest a whole lot to try to understand the end of the equation, we’re not doing nearly enough to figure out what the environmental triggers for some of these problems are.” Zerhouni responded that he thinks “there is truth to the fact that we need a multi-pronged approach. I think that your genes are only half of the reasons why you suffer from a disease. The environment is just as important.” He cited the NIH’s genome and environment initiative two years ago to look at the ten most common diseases and develop new measures of environmental exposures at the individual level.

CDC’s Primary Focus is on Protecting Health

According to CDC Director Julie Gerberding, there are three questions that plague the CDC: 1) Why, if we’re the nation that spends the most on health, aren’t we the healthiest nation? We are actually 37th in the world, according to the World Health Organization. 2) Why might our children have shorter life spans than their parents? And 3) fundamentally, Why is obesity becoming a national security concern in the United States?

The three questions, according to the CDC director are a reflection “on the fact that we just simply do not have the value in our health system that we need.” Part of that has to do with, again, fundamentally rethinking how health happens, she informed the Subcommittee. The CDC’s primary focus is on protecting health, rather than treating illness; in doing that through health promotion, prevention, and preparedness, rather than disease care; and on creating holistic approaches for improving people’s health across all stages of life, Gerberding explained.

“Many of the greatest opportunities today for improving people’s health fall outside the traditional health care system,” she testified. “The public health system aims to enhance quality of life across the lifespan, to prevent costly diseases before they reach the health care system, and to improve economic competitiveness by a safe and healthier workforce.” She emphasized that more needs to be done to improve our ability to safely and cost-effectively treat diseases, including creating a true health system that measures, values, and rewards health promotion and disease prevention as much or even more than disease care.

She indicated that there are lots of things that we know work and lots of things we can talk about scaling up. There are ways we can put health policies beyond this Subcommittee, by examining health in agriculture, health in transportation policies, and health in commerce policies. She concluded her testimony by arguing that there is also a very important need to market what we know works and to get it diffused and disseminated and taken up widely using some of the new technologies that are at our disposal today, so that people everywhere can benefit.

SAMSHA Administrator: A Public Health Approach Needs to Move Upstream

SAMSHA Administrator Terry Cline began by noting that during his tenure as the SAMHSA administrator he has had the benefit of traveling across the country and seeing the amazing results of SAMHSA-funded work. He cited as example, seeing men and women reunited with their children after conquering addiction, and people who are managing their mental illnesses and getting jobs along with reclaiming their lives and becoming contributing members of our society.

He related that as a “freshly minted psychologist” in Boston, Massachusetts, providing home-based therapy to families living in low-income housing developments on his way to his appointment he would walk by many other families that he knew needed help as much as the family he was going to see. But he simply did not have the time to work the other families. That experience brought home to him that the public health approach involves moving upstream, as well as being involved in the work being done downstream; “So while we continue to rescue those drowning individuals, we also need to move upstream and prevent and keep individuals from falling in the river in the first place.”

Cline stressed that one way to accomplish this goal “of service integration is to strengthen the relationship with primary care providers who have access to a much larger segment of the population than those seen in specialty services. We need to take behavioral health services to the people where they are and not wait until people are in crisis,” he informed the Subcommittee.

Moving “upstream,” Cline advised, drives the focus toward children and families, and harnessing the power of population-based public health functions and clinical preventive services such as screening and early intervention and linking people to needed health care services. “Untreated addiction and mental illnesses not only impacts the individual, it impacts almost every segment of our society including families, the workplace, communities; primary and emergency care settings; places of worship; schools; correctional facilities; and many other settings,” he informed the Subcommittee.

Cline pointed out that stigma and a long list of other barriers have kept mental health care and substance abuse treatment and prevention on the margins of the public health and healthcare delivery system, Cline insisted. He concluded: “Our very approach to healthcare in the U.S. is based on the treatment of acute- and chronic-conditions. It rewards and provides incentives for treating conditions rather than preventing them. To take advantage of the opportunities at hand, we must change the paradigm on which behavioral health care is based. Behavioral health is inextricably linked to overall physical health, and integration is valuable and necessary to advance the health of the Nation.”

AHRQ Director: ‘Simply Better Research Is Not Necessarily Going To Translate Into Better Value’

AHRQ’s Director Carolyn Clancy reviewed the mission of her agency: to improve the quality, safety, efficiency and effectiveness of health care for all Americans. That mission, she explained, is driven by the needs of the people who use the research, patients, clinicians, health system leaders, and policymakers. A major focus for the agency is translating the findings of AHRQ-supported research into practice and policy. To that end, AHRQ works very closely with NIH, CDC, and SAMHSA. It also works as a science partner with the Center for Medicaid/Medicare Services (CMS) and has collaborated with the Veterans Administration, and the Department of Defense, Clancy related.

She explained that AHRQ’s research agenda is broad and spans promoting health care information technology to reducing medical errors to supporting comparative effectiveness to enhancing American’s health care quality that they get right now. Clancy also highlighted the agency’s work in the area of comparative effectiveness research. AHRQ is authorized via the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement, and Modernization Act (MMA) of 2003 to conduct and support research with a focus on outcomes, comparative clinical effectiveness, and appropriateness of pharmaceuticals, devices and health care services. This research is based on the top ten conditions that are common and costly for those whose health care is funded by Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP programs. Since 2005, Clancy noted that AHRQ has released 14 comparative effectiveness reviews, ranging from diagnostic evaluation of technologies for abnormal breast cancer screening to comparative effectiveness of drugs for depression to treatments for prostate cancer.

10 Priority Conditions for Comparative Effectiveness Research

1. Arthritis and non-traumatic joint disorders (muscle bone, and joint conditions)
2. Cancer
3. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma
4. Dementia including Alzheimer’s disease
5. Depression and other mood disorders
6. Diabetes mellitus
7. Ischemic heart disease
8. Peptic ulcer disease and dyspepsia
9. Pneumonia
10. Stroke and hypertension

'Change In the Culture Of Health Care' Is Needed

Clancy cautioned the Subcommittee that "simply better research is not necessarily going to translate into better value." There is a need to anticipate how the information will be used and how it can be immediately available to clinicians and patients when they are confronting tough decisions right now. For that reason, AHRQ's research investments in the use of health IT (information technology) to improve health care right now are particularly important. "They will allow health information technology and electronic records to gather better information to do future reviews and to also serve as a platform for putting that information into the hands of clinicians and patients." Clancy informed the Subcommittee that since 2004, AHRQ has invested \$199 million in grants and contracts in 48 states to support and stimulate investment in health IT, especially in rural and underserved communities. According to the AHRQ director, anyone with a computer and internet access can be a place where people can connect with their health care providers for health care service. She explained that to ensure the power that health IT has to offer, we need to develop an evidence-based strategy to help clinicians and health care leaders decide which health IT innovations should be adopted and how they should be implemented.

Clancy acknowledged that health IT is not "a magic bullet for improving the quality, safety and value of health care." She stressed that a "change in the culture of health care" is needed, one that takes a "systematic approach to eliminating medical errors and improving overall quality." She noted that the agency recently published a proposed rule implementing the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act designed to foster the establishment of patient safety organizations to collect and analyze patient safety events reported by health care providers that are new and separate from all currently existing entities that are addressing health care quality. With additional funding, AHRQ could accelerate the development of patient safety event reporting systems as well as other provisions in the Act, she testified.

She observed that AHRQ's investment in patient safety has already shown improvements in care and has increased the commitment to patient safety in many health care settings. Clancy cited as example the AHRQ-supported research at Johns Hopkins University that developed a program that instituted a "simple five-step checklist designed to prevent certain hospital infections in intensive care units throughout Michigan ... Over 18 months, the program saved more than 1,500 lives and nearly \$200 million. One leader in critical care medicine described these results as one of the most important developments in a generation," said Clancy

Universal Health Care

Wrapping up the unusual hearing, Obey asked the panel that if "you take a look at all of the programs over which the [Labor-HHS] Subcommittee has jurisdiction, what are the three or four programs" that the Subcommittee should "most emphasize in order to increase access to health care?" He noted that at a previous hearing, the panel recommended that outside of doing basic medical research, which is the most basic of all preventive actions, more funds into outcomes research, into state risk pools, into community health centers, and in professional training, all to get us ready for the day when we have universal health care.

According to Zerhouni, a three-pronged approach is required: 1) reduced costs; 2) new ways to redistribute health care; and 3) understand that it is not just how we improve the delivery, but how what is delivered needs to be managed. Echoing his testimony, Cline encouraged a realignment of incentives in the system to the front end in the health care system and in places where we know people are beginning to struggle with their illnesses. Clancy questioned "access to what." She explained that according to AHRQ's annual reports submitted to Congress every year health care quality goes up every year by one to two percent, while spending keeps going up by about seven to eight percent. Ultimately to expand access, Clancy noted, we have to make sure that we to make sure we are getting the return we want. That requires "additional investments in research that helps us identify what are the highest value services and how do we provide them most efficiently is definitely going to be part of the foundation that we'll need in thinking about getting to universal access to care."

Gerberding agreed with Zerhouni, noting that access is more than cost, "it is also about awareness. Many people right now have technical access to care, but they don't avail themselves of the services because they're not aware of what they need or they are distracted by other priorities in their lives. She emphasized that "true access has to embrace those issues." She stressed that from the committee's perspective, she would hope "we would be talking about access to health and not just health care delivery." What can the labor and education parts of the committee do to encourage or incentivize or through a policy mechanism ensure that health can happen in the workplace or in our schools or in other community settings, she asked.

OJP REQUEST FOR CONSOLIDATION OF PROGRAMS DRAWS SKEPTICISM

Newly appointed Acting Assistant Attorney General Jeff Sedgwick had a difficult time defending the FY 2009 budget for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) before the House Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations Subcommittee on March 11. He attempted to sell the Administration's request for consolidating State and local law enforcement assistance programs with reduced budgets to a Congress that has recently rejected similar proposals. Sedgwick, who also remains director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), tried to argue that the consolidation would provide more flexibility to states and localities, where criminal activity can vary "from block to block." Subcommittee Chairman Allan Mollohan (D-WV) and Ranking Republican Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) were quite skeptical and declared that the budget reductions were "unacceptable."

Sedgwick was joined at the witness table by Carl Peed, head of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office, whose budget the Administration has once again slashed to almost nothing (\$4 million), and Cindy Dyer, director of the Office of Violence Against Women (OVAW), another budget the Administration is reducing significantly.

Although the hearing did not specifically discuss the budgets of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and BJS, Sedgwick referred to them while responding to questions about a possible "new crime wave." He suggested that the research and data collections supported by NIJ and BJS have produced a "knowledge for practice model" that has allowed the Department of Justice to benchmark crime trends. Sedgwick also noted that a number of hypotheses for the recent increases in crime in some areas are under investigation through NIJ supported studies, including questions concerning recidivism of newly released prisoners re-entering society. He suggested that an 18 city tour in 2006 to some places where crime was increasing and, others where it was not, convinced him that gangs, drugs, and guns were the chief culprits. He also stressed the importance of maintaining the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) as a counterpart to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report because of NCVS' ability to get the victim's perspective, particularly on crimes that may go unreported.

Responding to Mollohan's questions about recidivism, Sedgwick stated that research has demonstrated that keeping re-entered offenders from subsequent incarceration requires a multi-pronged approach including literacy, housing, employment, health care, and mental health services. He indicated that at the Federal level a multi-agency effort is underway to fund various services in the above areas.

Mollohan also focused on community policing. Peed noted the influence of research findings on the developments of the tactics - partnerships, problem solving skills, and organizational transformation - that became the cornerstones of community policing. Responding to the Chairman's question of whether there are demonstrated results Peed noted that 12 evaluations had delivered mixed results, but that a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report had suggested positive outcomes. Rep. Chaka Fatah (D-PA) indicated he was convinced the program has worked, suggesting the recent 12 year decline in crime could be attributed to the COPS program.

Both Mollohan and Frelinghuysen remain interested in OJP's dissemination strategies. Sedgwick mentioned the National Criminal Justice Research Service that acts as central clearinghouse to provide web access to all the research results and data from NIJ and BJS studies.

Although the Subcommittee clearly is ready to reject the consolidation proposal again and increase funding above the President's request, each year the budget for OJP programs declines, including a very significant reduction in the FY 2008 consolidated appropriations act. At the same time, despite numerous references to research and data during the hearing, the budgets of NIJ and BJS remain quite small and unremarked upon.

Hagy Confirmed as NIJ Director

On March 13, the Senate finally confirmed David Hagy as the new director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). Hagy, who was nominated last June and whose hearing was in December, became caught up in the latest struggle between the Senate Judiciary Committee and the White House over nominations and document releases. Hagy has led NIJ since December 2006 and has been with the Office of Justice Programs since September 2005, coming over from the Department of Homeland Security. Before coming to Washington, Hagy served in county government in Harris County, TX. He has a Ph.D. in Political Science from Tulane University.

SPENDING PANEL HEARS ABOUT SOCIAL SCIENCE FIELD RESEARCH FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

Rep. David Price (D-NC) is a political scientist by training and the Chairman of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Appropriation Subcommittee that oversees the Department's science and technology budget. While he understands DHS' emphasis on technological solutions to our homeland security needs, he is also acutely aware of the human factors that are a significant part of any protection policy.

At a hearing on March 12, the Subcommittee heard about the importance of field research to understanding the process of how young people get radicalized and turned into terrorists. Testifying before the panel, were a trio of scholars associated with RTI International who made the case for greater investment by DHS in science-based political violence field research. Richard Davis, who is also President of Davis Energy Inc. and a Senior Associate of the Center for the Study of the Presidency, defined this as "a team of researchers, many of whom need to be locally based, investigating the acts of political violence utilizing scientific methods in the community where perpetrators of violence originated." The witnesses suggested that this would not come cheaply.

Scott Atran, who is also associated with the John Jay School of Criminal Justice, the University of Michigan, and the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris, argued based on his field work in North Africa, Pakistan, and other seedbeds of radical violence that Muslims "tend to go to violence in small groups consisting mostly of friends, and kin." These groups arise within specific "scenes": neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and common leisure activities, often soccer. Atran's colleague, Marc Sageman, Scholar in Residence at the New York Police Department, as well as President of his own consulting firm and research director for ARTIS Research and Risk Modeling, agreed that: "Terrorism, like politics is local."

Terrorist activity, Sageman indicated is the "result of group interaction...a collective phenomenon." It involves social networks, but not all members of the network get radicalized. Those who do, experience a sense of "moral outrage" about moral violations against Muslims worldwide, Sageman related. Local belief systems play an important role, he noted, suggesting that U.S. Muslims have not been radicalized because they are part of a U.S. melting pot and have bought into the notion of the American Dream. Those who are radicalized are not intellectuals with an ideology, but who "feel" excluded from the society they live in, such as many Muslims in Europe. They are then mobilized by the local networks Atran discussed and become suicide bombers. Davis pointed out that "terrorists are rarely recruited by strangers."

Sageman also questioned U.S. anti-terrorism tactics of indiscriminate arrests, which only triggers moral outrage among the targeted population. Rather, he suggested, "understanding the significant local differences of our enemies will help us exploit them and accelerate the process of internal infighting." Atran also noted that understanding "sacred values," rather than rational self-interest, will affect anti-terrorist strategies such as offering tradeoffs. Offering material incentives for example, Atran argued, was often "taken as a deep insult." The key he contended was "to find alternate dreams for these people." Davis also pointed out that we need to get health, education, and social services people involved in anti-terrorist activity not just DHS, Defense, State, the FBI and CIA.

Following the panel, Jay Cohen, DHS' Undersecretary for Science and Technology, testified. Responding to questions from the Chairman regarding the RTI testimony, he extolled DHS' Human Factors Division. He stressed his directorate's emphasis on supporting research on hostile intent and on the psychology of terrorism. Cohen also cited the work of the DHS supported Centers of Excellence, particularly the Center for the Study of Terrorism and Anti-terrorism (START) and the Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events (CREATE), which he called "my better performing Centers."

CENSUS BUREAU FACES CRITICISM ON 2010 PLANS FROM OVERSIGHT AND SPENDING PANELS.

In a series of ongoing congressional hearings about the upcoming decennial census, both the House and Senate recently summoned Census Bureau officials in an effort to gain more insight on the planned schedule for the 2010 census, its operations, and its rising costs.

On March 5, witnesses appeared before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, chaired by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), to provide more information on the Census 2010 Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) project and overall decennial costs. In an attempt to reduce spending, the Bureau planned to rely on field-based handheld computers that canvassers and census takers would use to conduct address verification and the follow-up

response, thus eliminating the paper-based efforts of the 2000 Census. However, reported failures in the testing of the handhelds led to uncertainty about their ability to function sufficiently and to keep Census 2010 plans on track.

As late as December last year, Census Bureau officials reassured Congress that development of the electronic counters was on schedule and contingency plans were unnecessary. However the Government Accountability Office (GAO) had informed the Committee that FDCA had experienced schedule delays and continuing cost increases. These delays increased the likelihood that the systems testing at the full dress rehearsal would not be as comprehensive as planned. The MITRE Corporation, an outside group hired by the Census Bureau to examine the handheld contract with the Harris Corporation found similar problems, suggesting the Bureau immediately develop plans to use paper forms.

Presenting a unified front to the Committee, both Department of Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez and Census Director Steve Murdock again assured the Congress that the 2010 census will go on as planned and will be successful. "Preparing and executing the Decennial Census is one of the highest priorities and most important responsibilities of the Commerce Department," testified Gutierrez. "I am working closely with Census Director Steve Murdock to ensure that the Census Bureau and all of its dedicated hard working employees have the support necessary to carry out this constitutionally required task."

Murdock spoke passionately about his commitment to a successful 2010 Census declaring that reviewing and evaluating all Decennial Census preparations was the focus of his Directorship since he was sworn in on January 4, 2008. Murdock went on to point out that most components of the 2010 Decennial Census are proceeding according to plan but recognized that the FDCA program is facing significant schedule, performance, and cost issues.

"My disappointment comes not so much from the fact that the Census Bureau has tried and, in all likelihood, failed to use technology to improve the decennial census," said Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE); "It comes because we could wind up paying more for a poor quality Census 2010 because the Census Bureau did not heed the warnings coming from the GAO and others that their handheld project was troubled."

On March 11, Gutierrez returned to Congress to testify before the House Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department's FY 2009 budget request. The appropriation request for the Department is \$8.1 billion, an increase of \$1.3 billion over the fiscal year 2008 enacted level. The Census Bureau alone is responsible for the \$1.3 billion increase.

Subcommittee Chairman Alan Mollohan (D-WV) pressed Gutierrez for solutions to solve the rising cost and other issues with the FDCA project. Gutierrez outlined the following four options for moving forward that were reached by a task force chaired by former Census Deputy Director William Barron, which included former Census Directors Ken Prewitt and Vince Barabba and other Census officials, as well as representatives from MITRE.

Option 1

The first option is continuing with the current baseline largely as envisioned in the original FDCA project plan and contract. Harris would complete the handheld computers for address canvassing and nonresponse follow-up. Harris would also complete the development of the operations control system and the field operations infrastructure. Harris has already developed major parts of the operations control system and has the information technology infrastructure and staff to support further testing and development. However, given various issues related to the handhelds, we would simultaneously evaluate the feasibility of a paper-based back-up plan for nonresponse follow-up should the next FDCA dress rehearsal not succeed.

Option 2

In the second option, everything but Address Canvassing would shift back to the Census Bureau including nonresponse follow-up, the operations control system and the field operations infrastructure. The nonresponse follow-up would be paper based and handhelds would not be used. Census has extensive experience in conducting paper-based nonresponse follow-ups.

Option 3

The third option would shift nonresponse follow-up and field operations infrastructure to Census, but Harris would continue to develop the operations control system.

Option 4

Option four would shift only nonresponse follow-up back to Census and Harris would keep responsibility for the operations control system and field operations infrastructure. This option is contingent upon Harris being able to successfully complete both. Again, the nonresponse follow-up would be paper-based.

"We will work with this Expert Panel to finalize a plan to get the 2010 Census back on track," concluded Gutierrez. "I cannot over-emphasize the seriousness of this problem. My colleagues and I recognize that we must move quickly to address this problem, and implement solutions. While we still have an enormous challenge in front of us, I am confident that we are close to defining and implementing a strategy that will ensure a successful 2010 Census."

Whatever option the Bureau chooses, it is likely to need additional funding, probably designated as "emergency spending" and likely to become part of the FY 2008 Supplemental Appropriations bill that will be considered by the Congress upon its return. Gutierrez is scheduled to make another appearance before the Subcommittee no later than April to discuss the final plans for moving forward. The date has not been set at this time.

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS TO CHALLENGE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The United States is undergoing a significant demographic shift that has strong implications for our education system. As the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) report, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992 to 2022* indicates, the U.S. production of high school graduates is set to begin a long decline, with large drops in student populations in the Northeast and Midwest. Many states will also witness a dramatic shift in the racial and ethnic composition of their schools. In particular, the expected impact of these changes for institutions of higher education is enormous and college leaders are beginning to plan accordingly.

After 14 years of growth in the number of high school graduates, WICHE projects beginning in 2008-09, there will be a gradual decline in students, with numbers falling to their lowest around 2013-14. U.S. regions will see varying changes in their high school numbers. According to WICHE, between 2007-08 and 2021-22, the Northeast's number of high school graduates will shrink by 13 percent, while the Midwest's will drop by seven percent. By contrast, both the West and the South will experience growth in their high school populations, with the West growing by five percent and the South by ten percent.

The regions will also see an increase in student diversity, due to the decline of White non-Hispanic students, and increases in the number of students of Hispanic and Asian Pacific/Islanders descent. In the West and South these changes in the ethnic make-up of the student population will be dramatic. WICHE projects that the Class of 2010 in the West would be the first majority minority class, while the South will see its first majority minority graduating class in 2017.

David Longanecker of WICHE stated: "In the next decade, our nation will grapple with dramatic population changes. Many states in the West and South will struggle with explosive growth in both school enrollments and graduate numbers, while in the Northeast and Midwest a high number of states will see declines as their populations age or move away."

To access WICHE's *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992 to 2022* go to <http://www.wiche.edu/policy/knocking/1992-2022/>.

ABRAMS TO LEAVE OBSSR, BACHRACH DESIGNATED ACTING DIRECTOR

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Director David B. Abrams has announced that he is moving on. Abrams has been named the Executive Director of the Steven A. Schroeder National Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies at the American Legacy Foundation. "I am honored to be selected to direct Legacy's new Schroeder Institute. While research on tobacco use behavior and dependence has made great strides, the landscape is always changing and there is much urgent work that needs to be done," said Abrams. "Reducing the needless suffering, disease burden and cost of this addictive behavior remains the single most important public health contribution we can make right now to improve our nation's health. There are still more than 45 million smokers in America, and - every day - more than a thousand will die prematurely while thousands more will try their first tobacco products."

Abrams will be greatly missed by the social and behavioral science community. He arrived at the NIH during what has been a challenging budgetary environment. Despite the challenges, during his brief tenure, Abrams's vision has generated several new and exciting activities for social and behavioral science research at the NIH. He has worked closely with the COSSA co-chaired Coalition for the Advancement of Health Through Behavioral and Social Science Research (CAHT-BSSR).

On March 21, NIH Director Elias Zerhouni announced that Christine A. Bachrach will serve as Acting Associate Director for Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, NIH, and Acting Director, Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research. Bachrach will begin serving in this position on April 7, 2008. "Her wealth of research and leadership skills will make her a valuable asset in OBSSR, and I appreciate her willingness to guide the Office while we search for a new permanent ADBSSR," stated Zerhouni.

Bachrach has worked in the Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch in the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development's (NICHD) Center for Population Research since 1988, first as a Statistician/Demographer and since June 1992 as Chief of the Branch. She came to the NIH and NICHD from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, where she was a Statistician/Demographer. Bachrach was the founder and a Co-Chair of NICHD's Behavioral and Social Sciences Consortium, and has served on OBSSR's Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Coordinating Committee and its Steering Committee.

COSSA and the social and behavioral science community looks forward to working with Bachrach in her new role.

NEW COSSA MEMBERS

COSSA is pleased to announce that Georgetown University and the University of Nebraska, Lincoln have joined the Consortium. We look forward to working with them to promote the social and behavioral sciences as an integral and important part of U.S. science and technology policy. For information about how your university can become a COSSA member, please write to cossa@cossa.org.

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