

**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION:
PROGRESS ON MANY FRONTS** *HS*

Authorization Passes Senate

The Senate, by a vote of 99-0 on May 12, passed a three year authorization bill for the National Science Foundation (NSF). The bill covers FY 1998, 1999, and 2000. After months of negotiations among the House Science Committee, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, and the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, all of which have jurisdiction over NSF, agreement was reached on how to provide NSF its first authorization legislation since 1989.

Last year, the House passed H.R. 1273 re-authorizing NSF. The Senate did not act. Last week, the Senate passed a new version of H.R. 1273. Soon, the House is expected to accept this new version and send it to the President for his signature.

The new version of the bill contains authorization levels that are consistent with the President's requested budget for FY 1999 and his projected request for FY 2000; \$3.77 billion in the former, and close to \$3.9 billion in the latter.

Authorization bills do not provide the actual amount of funds, appropriations bills do that. However, this action is an indicator of strong bipartisan support for NSF and could send a signal to the appropriators that they should allocate the full 10 percent increase requested for NSF in FY 1999.

**Testimony to Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee**

In a brief hearing interrupted and finally ended by a series of votes on the Senate floor, the VA, HUD, Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee heard from NSF officials on May 7. NSF was represented by still director Neal Lane and newly

elected chair of the National Science Board Eamon Kelly, President of Tulane University.

Subcommittee Chair Senator Christopher 'Kit' Bond (R-MO) praised Lane for his service as Director and looked forward to his new post as head of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Lane defended NSF's FY 1999 budget proposal to which Bond and his colleagues seemed receptive, albeit raising again the matter of the tobacco settlement as the basis for the 10 percent increase. Bond also discussed with Lane the Plant Genome Initiative. Bond's interest in this topic led the Subcommittee to allocate \$40 million in its FY 1998 appropriation for NSF to support research in this area.

Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee, praised the Foundation for adopting a thematic approach to its budget and suggested that this indicated that NSF had listened to her when she called for "strategic initiatives" back in her days as chair of the Subcommittee in 1993-94. Upon leaving the hearing, Mikulski "blew kisses" at Lane, indicating approval of his tenure at NSF.

Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT) made a brief appearance at the hearing and told the Chairman to "give them what they want." If only it was that simple!

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Colwell Emerges from Senate Labor Committee

On May 13 the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee approved the nomination of Rita Colwell to become the next NSF Director. The non-controversial nomination of the University of Maryland Microbiologist did not engender a committee hearing. The hope is that the full Senate will confirm her before it leaves for the Memorial Day recess on May 22.

When Colwell takes the reins at NSF still depends on when Lane gets confirmed as head of OSTP. The Senate Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over Lane's nomination, hopes to hold a hearing on June 2 and send it to the Senate floor on June 3.

Economist Named Head of Science Board

Eamon Kelly, retiring President of Tulane University and an economist by training, has been elected by his peers as the next chairman of the National Science Board. He replaces Stanford Chemist Richard Zare, who officially rotated off the 24 member NSB on May 8. Kelly joined the Board in 1996.

He has been President of Tulane since 1981. Before joining Tulane, Kelly worked with the Ford Foundation and was the officer in charge of social development. He is also the former Chair of the

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences. *UPDATE* is published 22 times per year. Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$65; institutional subscriptions, \$130, overseas mail, \$130. ISSN 0749-4394. Address all inquiries to COSSA, 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: (202) 842-3525, Fax: (202) 842-2788.

Association of American Universities. His Ph.D. is from Columbia University.

University of Texas at El Paso President Diana Natalicio will continue as Vice Chair of the Board. Natalicio is a linguist by training.

PREWITT LIKELY CENSUS DIRECTOR NOMINEE

Word has leaked that Ken Prewitt, President of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), will likely get the administration's nod to lead the Census Bureau through its perilous journey conducting the 2000 Census.

Prewitt, a Stanford Ph.D. in political science, directed the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago from 1976-79. NORC is a major data collection and analysis center. He also served as Chairman of the Chicago political science department. Prewitt first led SSRC as President from 1979-85, where he was instrumental in launching COSSA. In 1985, Prewitt moved to the Rockefeller Foundation where he served as Vice President for Program. Ten years later, he returned to the SSRC.

The apparent selection of Prewitt surprised many stakeholder groups and some members of Congress who had been advocating for Barbara Bryant, the former Census Director, who led the bureau through the 1990 Census. Bryant, a Republican, was viewed as someone who could have an easier time achieving Senate confirmation. Bryant's association with the previous Census, which many view as a disaster, may have ended her chances.

Prewitt's road to the director's post still has some way to go. Under normal procedures, the President will officially announce his intention to nominate Prewitt, then there will be a hiatus until the FBI completes its investigation and the paperwork reaches the Senate, normal time for this is about 2-3 months. The Senate Commerce Committee will probably hold hearings and then the full Senate will vote. With only slightly over 30 legislative days left and the 13 appropriation bills still on the agenda

before the targeted adjournment date in early October, squeezing a Census Director nomination onto the calendar may be difficult.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE TOUTED ON HILL

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A recent Capitol Hill breakfast, co-sponsored by Senators Pete Domenici (R-NM) and Susan Collins (R-ME), provided members and their staffs important information about the uses of geographic information science (GIS) and the need to increase support for basic research to enhance this technology.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) through its National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA) has supported much of the basic research that helped create these systems and spawn a \$10 billion a year industry. Collins lauded NSF for its funding of basic research, particularly in this area, calling GIS "essential to the day-to-day operations of business, industry, and government." Domenici also praised support for basic research suggesting it was going to help develop "exciting and practical things to come." Among the members attending were House VA, HUD, Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Representative Jerry Lewis (R-CA) and his Golden State colleague Representative Steve Horn (R-CA).

Geographic information science addresses the fundamental issues surrounding the use of digital technology to handle information about places, activities, and phenomena on and near the surface of the Earth that is commonly stored on maps or images. Geographic information tools and techniques allow users to: navigate automobiles and emergency vehicles along optimal routes through busy cities; inventory and manage the physical facilities of utilities and city governments; conduct detailed epidemiological studies of diseases; track and model the spread of pollutants; select optimal sites for business development; and map crime and criminal behavior.

More research is necessary, according to Mike Goodchild, Director of the NCGIA at the University of California, Santa Barbara so that users can: make

decisions in the field; integrate data from many sources — field, satellites, digital libraries, real time; find information if it is not catalogued; transfer data and knowledge between systems; and provide GIS technology that is simple enough for children to use.

The breakfast was sponsored by the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science which has been organized to serve as an effective, unified voice for the geographic information science research community. Inquiries can be made to UCGIS c/o AAG, 1710 Sixteenth St., NW. Washington, DC 20009-3198 or at <http://www.ucgis.org>.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE LINKS TO PUBLIC HEALTH FOCUS OF CDC CONFERENCE

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Acknowledging the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) and former CDC Director David Satcher's increasing recognition of the value of behavioral and social science research contributions in promoting health, American Psychological Association Chief Executive Officer Raymond Fowler opened *Public Health in the 21st Century: Behavioral and Social Science Contributions*, a conference that brought together behavioral and social scientists and public health professionals in an interactive program in Atlanta, May 7- 8.

The conference was organized and/or sponsored by a myriad of scientific groups, federal agencies, and a foundation, including: the American Psychological Association, COSSA, the American Sociological Association, the American Anthropological Association, the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, the CDC, NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, Office on AIDS Research, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Office of Research on Women's Health, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The sessions focused on three themes: risk factors, interventions, and evaluation, and was designed to:

- present research findings and successful models that illustrate achievements in and highlight the importance of integrating behavioral and social sciences and public health;
- further the understanding among public health specialists of the importance of behavioral and social science research in addressing public health issues;
- enhance the understanding of public health perspectives, concepts, and goals among behavioral scientists; and
- serve as a springboard for future multidisciplinary communication and collaboration between behavioral and social scientists and public health researchers and professionals.

Speakers included: Arthur Bienenstock, the Associate Director for Science, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President (the keynote speaker); Dixie Snider, Associate Director for Science at the CDC; Abraham H. Wandersman of the University of South Carolina; and Pekka Puska of the National Public Health Institute in Finland.

Snider noted that the CDC is very much interested in the many different sciences and is aware of the importance of behavioral and social sciences in a population-based agency.

Describing the conference as "groundbreaking and historic," National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Director Norman Anderson canceled a trip to London to attend the CDC conference and told participants that it was "well worth it." Collaboration between the NIH and CDC is an ideal next step for unmet needs, Anderson said. The collaboration would include problem-specific working groups organized around the public health approach. Possible outcomes could be the identification of needs in basic and epidemiologic research, the identification of areas of research that are ready for dissemination, and a joint funding initiative.

Proceedings from the conference will be disseminated through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

USING COMPUTERS TO SURVEY SUGGESTS INCREASED MALE TEEN RISKY BEHAVIOR DIT

United States teens may be more likely to engage in risky behavior such as hard drug use than previously estimated, according to results of a recent survey. In the most recent wave of the National Survey of Adolescent Males (NSAM), teens queried in a self-administered computer survey reported higher incidences of street drug use, carrying of gun or knives, and male-male sex than did teens surveyed using a traditional pencil and paper questionnaire. Researchers from the Urban Institute in Washington, the University of Illinois and the Research Triangle Institute of North Carolina conducted the study of more than 1,600 teen males beginning in 1995.

The authors randomly assigned adolescents to one of two methods to answer the most sensitive questions: one group used the traditional paper and pencil and the other used a new technology called audio computer-assisted self-interviewing (Audio-CASI). Audio-CASI involved respondents listening to questions on headphones and answering questions by pressing numbered keys on a keyboard.

Speaking at a press conference on May 7, Charles Turner, the lead researcher and director of the Program in Health and Behavior Measurement at the Research Triangle Institute, stated that the new technology provides more accurate results, reduces underreporting bias, and "indicate[s] that the risk[s] encountered by the adolescent population are greater than those estimated by previous household surveys." The research was funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Development, and the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Population Affairs.

"Surprising" Results

Turner noted that the results, published in the May 8 edition of *Science*, "were surprising. We

found very substantial increases in the reporting of the most sensitive or stigmatized behaviors." Turner pointed to the divergence between those who reported heavy drug use using the traditional method and those using the Audio-CASI technology.

In addition, teens surveyed using the Audio-CASI method were five times more likely to report that they were always or often drunk when they had heterosexual sex (2.2% versus 10.8%). Audio-CASI respondents were also two times as likely to report having used crack or cocaine in the previous 12 months.

In conclusion, Turner said that if these results can be replicated they "present a disturbing picture of the biological and social risks that confront young males in the United States at the end of the 20th century."

LECTURE FOCUSES ON "EPIDEMIC OF YOUTH GUN VIOLENCE"

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On May 5, Duke University Professor Phillip Cook spoke at the National Institute of Justice's final lecture in its 1998 "Perspectives on Crime and Justice" series. Cook's talk, entitled *The Epidemic of Youth Gun Violence*, focused on the eight-year period between 1985 and 1993, which he termed the "peak years of youth violence." During this period, Cook said, the number of youth gun homicides increased more than any other form of youth committed homicide.

Cook began by noting that this period's violence was highly concentrated among young black males between the ages of 17 and 24. The death rate for this group, according to Cook, was 1 in 24 — similar to the death rate of American soldiers during the Vietnam War. There are two competing ideas to explain the increase in youth violence during this period, according to Cook.

First, many subscribe to the notion that the increased violence is a direct result of social circumstances — declining economic opportunities, wage rates and earnings, illegitimacy, and the breakdown of the family. Second, some explain the violence by invoking Princeton University Professor

John Dilulio's "Superpredator" thesis. Dilulio believes, according to Cook, that moral poverty and lack of familiar love and guidance have produced a class of radically impulsive and violent youth. Cook noted that he more readily supports the first explanation. He said that for Dilulio's thesis to have credibility, one would see an increase in property crimes and non-homicide crimes during this period. This did not happen; these types of crime remained relatively static during this period, said Cook.

Cook indicated that he is unsure of the reasons behind the pervasiveness of guns and the increased gun violence during this period. He did, however, discount Carnegie Mellon Professor and Director of the National Consortium on Violence Research Al Blumstein's theory that guns increased with the introduction and establishment of crack markets in the United States. Cook stated that while plausible, because of the right timing, he's "not quite sure" that this is why or how it happened.

Since 1993, youth gun violence has decreased, said Cook. He mentioned several possible explanations for the decrease. On the supply side, the federal government has taken the key role. According to Cook, there has been a noticeable and effective federal law enforcement response, particularly by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. Also, the Brady Law has made a difference. The states have taken the lead role on the demand side, Cook noted. The cities, as evidenced by the Boston Gun Project, also have cracked down on guns and gun violence. Despite its recent decline, he emphasized that youth gun violence is still a "pressing problem."

DATA ON NATION'S CHILDREN AVAILABLE

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- The teen birth rate for 15 - 19 year old young women has been dropping since 1991, with the largest decrease among black teens.
- Use of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and cocaine by high school students has increased during the 1990s following periods of decreasing use during the previous decade.
- The mortality rate for black youth ages 15-19, following a sustained period of decline, increased dramatically during the

late 1980s, and has remained at a very high level since 1991. During that same time period, mortality rates among white youth ages 15 -19 has declined.

The above facts are from the second edition of an annual report, *Trends in the Well-being of America's Children and Youth: 1997* compiled by the Department of Health and Human Services and designed to monitor the overall status of the nation's children. "This annual report provides valuable information about the status of our nation's most valuable resource — its children and youth," says Margaret Hamburg, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) in the letter accompanying the report released earlier this year.

Hamburg also notes that it is part of the mission of ASPE to "produce data and analysis useful to those concerned with health and human services policy." Over 80 national trends in five key domains in the lives of children and youth are contained in annotated tables within the report. These key areas are: 1) population, family and neighborhood; 2) economic security; 3) health conditions; 4) social development, behavioral health, and teen fertility; and 5) education and achievement.

The report provides graphics and tables "to highlight key trends" and, where possible, includes trends from the 1970s through the 1990s. It also includes data from earlier years where it is available, as well as projections into the 21st century.

Gaps In Data Remain

The report declares that major gaps remain "in the federal statistical system that must be filled if we are to have a complete picture of the quality of our children's lives." According to the report, the nation lacks good indicators of school readiness for young children. "Measures of mental health for any age child are rare, though one such measure was recently added to the National Health Interview Survey." Also missing are positive measures of social development and related behaviors, resulting in a gloomier picture of children's overall well-being.

There are "very few indicators available that reflect important social processes affecting child well-being that go on inside the family and within the neighborhood." Indicators related to fathering are

"virtually nonexistent." In addition, "reliable indicators of child homelessness also need to be developed."

Finally, other areas "in need of measurement development or improvements in the quality, consistency, and frequency of available data include child abuse and neglect, youth violent crime, day care quality, learning disabilities, and measures of children in institutionalized care."

The report was compiled by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, an interagency group of leaders of federal agencies and departments responsible for collecting or analyzing data on children and youth. The Forum also publishes an annual report on key indicators of child and youth well-being, entitled *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*.

The complete report is available on the web:
<http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov>

SHALALA ANNOUNCES NEW HEAD OF HRSA

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Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala announced May 12 the appointment of Claude Fox as administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). HRSA, with a \$3.67 billion budget, expands access to care for poor, uninsured and isolated individuals and families through an array of grants to state and local governments, health care providers, and health professions training programs. Fox has been HRSA's acting administrator for the past year. He previously served as HHS regional health administrator, overseeing federal health and human services programs in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia.

VISIT COSSA'S WEBSITE:

<http://members.aol.com/socscience/COSSAindex.htm>

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

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COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency for further information or application materials. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [Program Announcement 98047]

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announces the availability of fiscal year (FY) 1998 funds for cooperative agreement programs for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research Centers. CDC is committed to achieving the health promotion and disease prevention objectives of "Healthy People 2000," a DHHS-led national activity to reduce morbidity and mortality and improve the quality of life. This announcement is related to health priorities in Health Promotion, Health Protection, and Preventive Services. Approximately \$7 million is available for FY 1998 to fund approximately fourteen new awards. It is expected that the average award will be \$500,000. It is expected that the awards will begin on or about September 30, 1998, and will be made for a 12-month budget period within a project period of up to 5 years.

Eligible applicants are academic health centers; defined as schools of public health, medicine, or osteopathy; that have: A) Multidisciplinary faculty with expertise in public health and which has working relationships with relevant groups in such fields as public health, medicine, psychology, nursing, oral health, social work, education, and business; B) Core faculty in epidemiology, biostatistics, social sciences, behavioral and environmental health services, and health administration; C) Demonstrated curriculum in health promotion and disease prevention; and D) Capability for residency training in public health or preventive medicine.

To receive additional written information and to request an application kit, call 1-888-GRANTS4. You may also obtain this announcement from the CDC's homepage at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Methodology and Measurement in the Behavioral and Social Sciences

The National Institute on Aging (NIA), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Institute on Child Health & Human Development (NICHD), National Institute of Dental Research (NIDR), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) invite qualified researchers to submit research grant applications on methodology and measurement in the behavioral and social sciences. Methodology and measurement issues in the behavioral and social sciences include the processes that underlie self reports, research design, data collection techniques, measurement, data analysis techniques, and ethical issues in the above topics. The goal of this program announcement is to encourage research that will improve the quality and scientific power of data collected in the behavioral and social sciences, relevant to the missions of the NIH Institutes and Centers. Deadlines are June 1 and October 1. For more information contact Jared B. Jobe, Ph.D at 301/496-3137 or <http://www.med.nyu.edu>.

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