



# COSSA

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### Lots of Advice on The Nation's Budget Problems

Following a severe economic downturn and a large government spending package to stimulate recovery, in FY 2009 the U.S. budget deficit reached its highest level, measured as a share of the total economy, since World War II. Many expect the FY 2010 deficit will approach the same level. Almost all agree that these levels of annual deficits are unsustainable.

As Congress returned for the new year, it faced the periodic issue of raising the ceiling on the nation's debt, so that the government can continue to borrow and provide funding for programs and services. Pressure from Senators Kent Conrad (D-ND), Chairman of the Budget Committee, and Judd Gregg (R-NH), Ranking Republican of that panel, to create a congressional commission to confront the nation's overall debt problem has mounted to the point where the President endorsed the idea on January 23. Conrad and Gregg would give the commission power to present its recommendations and then fast-track a vote by Congress to accept or reject them. Whether the full Senate will accept this proposal is uncertain.

On February 1, President Obama will unveil his FY 2011 budget proposal. There is again talk of restraining domestic discretionary spending to begin the process of reducing future deficits.

In the midst of all this maneuvering, the National Academies' and the National Academy of Public Administration have added their voices to the debate. On January 13 they released the report, *Choosing the Nation's Fiscal Future*. The Committee that produced the report was co-chaired by

Rudolph Penner, former head of the Congressional Budget Office and now at the Urban Institute, and John Palmer, former Dean of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University and now Professor Emeritus there. The panel included former COSSA Board Members Robert Reischauer, President of the Urban Institute, and Alan Auerbach of the University of California, Berkeley, as well as former COSSA Seminar Speaker Olivia Mitchell of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and COSSA Annual Meeting speaker Rebecca Blank, who served until her appointment as Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs. Richard Atkinson, former NSF Director and currently head of the National Academies' Division on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE), also served on the panel. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supported the effort.

The Committee warns that "the current trajectory of the federal budget cannot be sustained...The projected long-term mismatch between expected revenues and the estimated costs of government policies and programs will continue to require the government to borrow heavily." Such borrowing will "inevitably limit the nation's future wealth," by reducing the growth of capital stock, increasing the nation's liabilities to investors abroad and expand the portion of the budget required to pay interest on the debt, thus reducing the resources available for all other government activities. The increased debt could also contribute to a loss of international and domestic investor confidence. This could then lead to even higher interest rates, lower domestic investment, and a falling dollar. Not a pretty picture!

The Committee calls for action to remedy the situation soon. They admit that given the severity of the economic downturn, large deficits and more borrowing "are unavoidable" in the next year or two. However, "action ought to begin soon thereafter - the committee believes that fiscal 2012 is a reasonable time to start - to first slow the rapid increase of the federal debt relative to the economy, and then over several years, reduce it to a more desirable level."

The metric the panel wants to use as an indicator of "fiscal prudence" is the size of the government's debt as a percentage of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). At the moment that number is above 50 percent and rising rapidly. The Committee notes "that some combination of revenue increases and spending restraints should be implemented soon to constrain the growth of federal debt as a percentage of GDP within a decade to a 60 percent level;" an achievable target. There are, they suggest, risks associated with a higher ratio and difficulties implementing policies that would create a lower ratio.

With the debate over health care reform delayed following the Senate election in Massachusetts on January 19, the report reminds us that "the rapid growth of federal spending for health care is the largest contributor to the nation's long-term fiscal challenge." Any reasonable path to fiscal sustainability, the committee asserts, "will have to include reforms to reduce the growth rates of Medicare and Medicaid. Social Security, they argue, presents a "far less problematic, but still substantial," challenge.

The Committee also recommends moderated spending growth through curtailing or reforming less effective programs. Presidents have tried this in their budget proposals, usually encountering significant resistance from congressional champions of those programs under attack. On the revenue side, a more fair and efficient tax system and an introduction of new taxes on consumption are part of the options the Committee foresees to enhance the government's resources.

### **Scenarios to Bring the Deficit Under Control**

The report offers four scenarios that illustrate how to get to the desired levels. The Committee suggests that once the target debt ratio is reached the nation can accept annual deficits of two to three percent of GDP without debt growing faster than GDP. The four possible scenarios are:

Low spending and revenue. Revenues are held to 18 to 19 percent of GDP and spending is two to

three points higher. This would require sharp reductions in projected growth for health and retirement programs and reductions in spending for all other federal responsibilities.

High spending and revenue. Spending reaches one-third of GDP and increased revenues keep pace. It would still require reductions in health spending, but would accommodate Social Security needs and would allow spending on all other federal programs to increase over the levels implied by current policies.

Intermediate Path 1. Spending and revenues rise to about one-fourth of GDP and constrained spending on the elderly would support only modest expansion of other federal spending. It would allow the federal government to make selective new public investments to promote economic growth, preserve the environment, and build for the future.

Intermediate Path 2. Again spending and revenues would rise to about one-fourth of GDP. Spending for health and retirement benefits would slow, but would not be as constrained as under Intermediate Path 1, but this would lead to reduced spending for all other government programs. This path reflects the view that the government's explicit promises to the elderly are a higher priority than other spending.

The Committee recognizes the immense political difficulty of moving down any of these paths. Yet, it and other groups like the Center for American Progress, which has issued a similar report, *A Path to Balance: A Strategy for Realigning the Federal Budget*, and all the other federal budget watchers agree that something must happen. The President's upcoming State of the Union on January 27 and his budget the following week will give us a sense of what the Administration wants to do on this subject.

The NAS/NAPA report can be found at: [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=12808](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12808).

The Center for American Progress report can be found at:  
[http://www.americanprogress.org/pressroom/releases/2009/12/path\\_to\\_balance.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/pressroom/releases/2009/12/path_to_balance.html).

## House Science Panel Outlines 2010 Agenda; Reauthorizing 'America COMPETES' Tops The List

Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN), chairman of the House Science and Technology Committee, has outlined his agenda for this year's second session of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. The reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act, which includes the authorization for the National Science Foundation (NSF), is the major priority.

Congress enacted COMPETES in 2007 to strengthen, according to Gordon, our national economic competitiveness through investments in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education and by setting the NSF, National Institutes of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy's Office of Science, on a budget-doubling path in seven years.

The Committee has organized its agenda around the topics of: 1) Fostering Innovation; 2) Spurring Job Creation and Developing a More Skilled Workforce; 3) Securing Energy Independence; 4) Providing Safety and Security; and 5) Addressing Environmental Challenges.

Keeping NSF on the doubling path is part of the Fostering Innovation goal as is developing a comprehensive, government-wide innovation agenda. Some issues regarding NSF reauthorization include the agency's education and human resources programs and management, including its modes of graduate support, NSF's instrumentation program, and its commitment to high-risk, high-

reward research. In recommending budget figures, the Committee hopes to be realistic.

The key to Spurring Job Creation and a Skilled Workforce is to expand and strengthen the coordination of STEM education programs to ensure the U.S. has a technologically skilled workforce. At the same time, the Committee hopes to focus resources on broadening participation in STEM fields.

The Committee's first hearing held on January 20 included the heads of the Council on Competitiveness, the Business Roundtable, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers as witnesses. They reinforced the Chairman and the panel's emphasis on improving STEM education and continuing the nation's commitment to increasing resources for basic research to promote innovation.

Part of Securing Energy Independence, according to the Committee's agenda, is to increase research and development focused on enhancing energy efficiency and alternative energy technologies. There is no indication that this includes examining the social and behavioral factors that are part of the energy use equation.

Under Providing Safety and Security, the panel intends to re-examine the Department of Homeland Security's research priorities, as well as focus on the nation's surface transportation research and development programs to increase safety, boost efficiency, and reduce congestion. The Committee is also interested in research to mitigate earthquake and other natural disaster damages. Another priority in this category is to complete Cybersecurity legislation.

Regarding Addressing Environmental Challenges, the Committee has discussed the idea of an organic act for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and may pursue that in 2010. It also will take a look at EPA's research and development activities to align them "with the agency's current missions and anticipated needs."

The Committee's Ranking Republican Rep. Ralph Hall (R-TX) issued a statement agreeing with the general thrust of Chairman Gordon's agenda, including its intention to reauthorize NASA. Hall, however, emphasized that "one of my primary goals will continue to be ensuring that taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely and efficiently." He added, "In the current economy it is imperative that we keep a critical eye toward costs and set priorities that will get the most out of limited taxpayer dollars."

This is Chairman Gordon's last year in the Congress. He intends to use his leadership of the Science and Technology panel to leave his mark on the nation's future. The Committee is on a tight schedule, as the politicized-election-year-Congress could make enactment of legislation difficult after the August recess.

## BJS Nominee James Lynch Appears Before Senate Judiciary Committee

James Lynch, nominated by President Obama as Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) on October 29, appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 20, to respond to questions about his qualifications and plans for his new position.

Lynch is the Distinguished Professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and has served as the representative of the American Society of Criminology on the COSSA Board of Directors. Sen. Ted Kaufman (D-DE), who chaired the hearing in place of Committee Chair Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), introduced Lynch as one of the "foremost experts" who has worked to improve criminal justice data systems. Also noted was Lynch's service on the National Academies' panel that produced the report *Ensuring the Quality, Credibility, and Relevance of U.S. Justice Statistics*.

Kaufman asked Lynch what he saw as the biggest challenges facing a new director for BJS. Lynch

responded that maintaining the Bureau's credibility as an independent statistics agency that produces accurate, timely and useful information while maintaining confidentiality and access would be his biggest test.

The independence issue would also get referred to by Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), the panel's Ranking Republican, and Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK). Both referenced the situation during the George W. Bush administration when political interference with the Bureau was made in an attempt to control information in a press release that led to the reassignment of the then-BJS director Lawrence Greenfeld.

In response to Coburn, Lynch committed himself to resist any political interference, and cited the *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency*, now in its fourth edition, published by the National Academies' Committee on National Statistics, as his guidebook for his stewardship of BJS.

Noting the *Ensuring the Quality* report, Coburn asked about the identified gaps it found in BJS' data series, particularly in Juvenile Justice and Drugs and Crime. Lynch responded that BJS "can't do it all," (he didn't mention its meager budget) and that he would evaluate the agency's priorities after his confirmation and some time in his new position.

Sessions was also interested in some of the recommendations in the NAS report. He asked about the desire to move BJS out of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), which the Senator believed was not a good idea. Sessions suggested that OJP, and BJS within it, had provided important leadership to help significantly improve the U.S. criminal justice system. Lynch conceded that the move was not going to happen and that he was comfortable with BJS remaining in OJP.

The Ranking Republican also articulated concern about the report's comments on the Prison Rape Elimination Act. Lynch indicated that the NAS panel felt that there was too much co-mingling of the statistical and enforcement activities delineated in the Act to the detriment of both. Sessions also referenced Lynch's research on crime by immigrants, expressing skepticism with the finding that immigrants were no more likely to commit crimes than non-immigrants.

Sen. Al Franken (D-MN) asked Lynch about crime reporting in Indian country. Franken noted that his state of Minnesota prohibits the conveying of Native American crime data to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports. Lynch told Franken that this is an issue complicated by sovereignty and jurisdictional problems, but that as BJS director he would try to sort these out to produce more useful numbers.

Kaufman concluded the hearing, which also included four nominees for federal district court judgeships, by declaring again the importance of good data for the nation's fight against crime and how well-qualified Lynch is to head BJS.

The Senate Judiciary Committee must now report Lynch's nomination to the full Senate which must vote to confirm him. All concerned hope this will happen soon.

## National Science Board Releases Science and Engineering Indicators 2010

**On January 15, the National Science Board (NSB) released the 2010 version of *Science and Engineering Indicators*, the biennial examination of the "scope, quality, and vitality" of the nation's science and engineering enterprise and its place in the world. The report is prepared by the Science Resources Statistics division of the National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral and Economics**

## Sciences Directorate. The division is led by Lynda Carlson.

The report includes chapters and data on: Elementary and Secondary Education; Higher Education in Science and Engineering; Science and Engineering Labor Force; Research and Development: National Trends and International Linkages; Academic Research and Development; Industry, Technology, and the Global Marketplace; Science and Technology: Public Attitudes and Understanding; and State Indicators. An appendix volume contains detailed data tables keyed to each of the eight chapters.

The document's conclusion is that other nations are moving swiftly to catch and surpass the U.S. as the leader in the world scientific and engineering game. The report notes that over the past decade, "Research and Development (R&D) intensity - how much of a country's economic activity or gross domestic product is expended on R&D - has grown considerably in Asia, while remaining steady in the U.S." The data indicate that annual growth of R&D expenditures in the U.S. has averaged five to six percent while in Asia, it has skyrocketed. In some Asian countries, R&D growth rate is two, three, even four, times that of the U.S."

Measured another way, in terms of R&D expenditures as a share of economic output, while Japan has surpassed the U.S. for quite some time, South Korea is now in the lead. This matters, the report argues, because investment in R&D is a major driver of innovation, which builds on new knowledge and technologies, contributes to national competitiveness and furthers social welfare. R&D expenditures also indicate the priority given to advancing science and technology relative to other national goals.

Another key indicator, according to the NSB, is intellectual research outputs. "While the U.S. continues to lead the world in research publications, China has become the second most prolific contributor," the report shows. China's rapidly developing science base now produces eight percent of the world's research publications, up from just two percent of the world's share in 1995, when it ranked 14th.

Other indicators included in the report include the globalization of science and engineering capability; funding, performance and portfolio of U.S. R&D trends; and the composition of the U.S. S&E workforce. One note of good news: Scientist remains a high prestige occupation with favorable public support comparable to that given firefighters.

Some factoids from the report: In terms of the share of academic R&D, other countries spend much more on the social sciences than does the U.S. With data from 2006 and 2007, the U.S. share is 6.5 percent, Germany is 8.4 percent, Russia is 13.5 percent, Taiwan is 10.8 percent, Spain is 22.3 percent and Australia is 20.5 percent. More than 30 percent of doctorate holders in the social sciences now have a post-doc position in their career path. The highest self-employment rate among doctorate holders occurs in the social sciences (19 percent).

The report is available at: <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind10/>.

## Government Organized Committee on Scholarly Publishing Issues Report

In June 2009, the House Science and Technology Committee, in coordination with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), organized a Scholarly Publishing Roundtable to discuss issues related to expanding public access to the journal articles arising from research funded by U.S. government agencies. The Roundtable group recently issued its report.

John Vaughan, Executive Vice President of the Association of American Universities, chaired the group. Among the participants on the 14 member panel was Richard McCarty, formerly Executive Director for Science at the American Psychological Association (APA) and now the Provost of Vanderbilt University. McCarty served on the COSSA Executive Committee during his tenure at APA.

The Roundtable members identified a set of principles which "should continue to inhere in scholarly publishing as it evolves." These include: a commitment to peer review as critical in maintaining high quality and editorial integrity; the necessity for publishers to adapt their business models in "an evolving landscape;" more broadly accessible scholarly and scientific publications; sustained archiving and preservation; and maximization of the possibilities for creative reuse and interoperations of published research results on sites that host them.

These principles led to the group's core recommendation that: "Each federal agency should expeditiously but carefully develop and implement an explicit public access policy that brings about free public access to the results of the research that it funds as soon as possible after those results have been published in a peer-reviewed journal."

The Roundtable recognized that embargo periods between publication and public access are necessary and that some disciplines may require a longer time period. The report also stated that: "every effort should be made to have the version of record as the version to which free access is provided." The group urged OSTP to facilitate interagency collaboration to develop interoperability standards for full texts and metadata, navigation tools, and other applications.

The report also recommended that government agencies extend the reach of their public access policies through voluntary collaborations with non-governmental stakeholders. Any policies promulgated in this area should also foster innovation in the research and educational use of scholarly publications, according to the report. The Roundtable participants concluded that government public access policies should address the need to resolve the challenges of long-term digital preservations.

Finally, the report called for OSTP to establish a public access advisory committee to provide a mechanism for periodic assessment of the rapidly changing scholarly publishing landscape.

The House Science and Technology Committee will likely continue to examine this issue during 2010.

The full report is available at: [http://www.aau.edu/policy/scholarly\\_publishing\\_roundtable.aspx?id=6894](http://www.aau.edu/policy/scholarly_publishing_roundtable.aspx?id=6894).

## NIGMS Announces Intention to Undertake Strategic Plan on Research Training

At the 142<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Advisory General Medical Sciences Council (NAGMSC) to the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) on January 22, director Jeremy Berg discussed the launch of the Institute's process to undertake a strategic plan focused on research training.

Addressing his council, Berg observed that research training is supported by a number of mechanisms at the Institute. He also pointed out that the biomedical workforce and especially academic faculty is not representative of American society in terms of gender, racial and ethnic diversity. Individuals trained with support from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) pursue many career paths, including academic research, teaching, industrial research, start-up companies,

science policy, among others. Berg noted that there has been a sense that NIH training is to produce R01 investigators and that is the only successful outcome; an assumption that might need rethinking.

The Institute has established two committees: 1) Training Data Inventory Committee led by Berg and 2) Strategic Plan for Training and Career Development led by NIGMS' deputy director Judith Greenberg. In the coming days, the Institute will post the intended process and a statement of intent explaining why and what it is seeking to accomplish. The goal of the plan, according to Berg, is to examine existing activities and articulate strategies to help the Institute build and sustain a workforce. The groups are wrestling with core assumptions, the distinctive features of an ideal training model, and potential obstacles. The Institute will seek stakeholder input via a website in March/April. It will also hold meetings across the country in San Francisco, CA; Chicago, IL; Philadelphia, PA; and Atlanta, GA. In addition, there are plans to hold a webinar in late June 2010. In May, NAGMSC will hold a "richer" discussion on the subject. The first draft will likely be written in July-September and finalized in October-December.

In a request for information (RFI) that NIGMS intends to issue in coming months, the Institute will be seeking comments to six questions from the stakeholder community:

1. What constitutes success in biomedical research training from the perspective of an individual trainee, an Institute, and society?
2. What can NIGMS do to encourage an optimal balance of breadth and depth in research training?
3. What can NIGMS do to encourage an appropriate balance between research productivity and other training activities for mentors' trainees?
4. What can NIGMS do through its training programs to promote and encourage greater diversity (broadly defined) in the biomedical research workforce?
5. Recognizing that students have different career goals and interests, should NIGMS encourage greater flexibility in training, and if so, how?
6. What should NIGMS do to ensure that the Institute monitor, measure, and continuously improve the quality of its training efforts?

## Wrong Place, Wrong Time: Understanding The Violence In The Lives Of Young Black Men

On January 6, John A. Rich, 2006 MacArthur fellow and director of Center for Nonviolence and Social Justice, and director of the Center for Academic Public Health Practice at Drexel University in Philadelphia, gave the NIH Wednesday afternoon lecture entitled "Wrong Place, Wrong Time, understanding the Violence in the Lives of Young Black Men.



Rich, an expert in inner city health problems, characterized the lecture as different from those typically given as part of the NIH lecture series by "brilliant biomedical and genetic scientists." His topic was how to improve the health of men of color. He argued that connections can exist between trauma experienced by young people and the mechanisms that make their health less than optimum.

Rich shared that he met young men in hospital wards who had experienced violence who said that their injuries were the result of being in "the wrong place at the wrong time." From these experiences came the title of the lecture and a recent book on this issue. Initially, Rich noted that he and his colleagues would interpret the explanation given by the young men as an excuse for bad behavior. They "assumed that young black men didn't just get shot, they got themselves shot." Their assumptions reflected that the life experiences of these

young black men were different "from our own," Rich explained. Using the narrative method to do his research, Rich explained that using the young men's own words about the wrong place, wrong time, will help researchers think about what the wrong place, wrong time really is and how to create a right and safe place for these young people. Use of the narrative method, he further explained, is a way to understand the complexity and humanity of these young men.

Rich's current work examines trauma and violence in healthcare settings and what it means for the research, clinicians and public health. Rich came to his research as a clinician. He realized as a primary care physician that he saw very few black men despite seeing them throughout the hospital. In recognition of their need for primary care, Rich and his colleagues started a clinic - the Young Men's Health Clinic. The idea was to see if there was an opportunity to bridge the gap between pediatric care and adult care for these young people.

They found that among their subjects -- 80 percent were uninsured, 20 percent had never seen a doctor, 25 percent had never seen a dentist, 45 percent had a violent injury in the past, 51 percent had witnessed a shooting or a stabbing, 25 percent do not feel safe, and 44 percent had been harassed by the police. These statistics, said Rich, made him aware that the issue of trauma and adversity was very much primary in the lives of these young men. He pointed out, however, that not all the young men had been involved in activities considered criminal.

Using data from Philadelphia, Rich looked at male homicide from 2000 through 2008. For Black males younger than age 17 there were 25-30 homicides per year; for black males ages 18 -23 the rate was 75-130; and for those less than 40 years old the homicide rate was 75-100. In 2006 alone, for those under the age of 40, Philadelphia had 406 homicides. For white males, while still tragic, the homicide rate was much less.

#### **Life Expectancy for Black Men 'Still Lags Behind In a Troubling Way'**

He cautioned that if we only look at the homicide rate, however, we miss most of the action about trauma and violence. While there were 406 homicides, there were 2,004 known shootings, 9,000 aggravated assaults reported (more violence is not reported). In these communities and neighborhoods where these young men live they are constantly surrounded by violence, whether it affects them directly or not.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), according to Rich, estimates that for every homicide there are 94 nonfatal incidents. CDC also reports that there are 16,800 homicides and 2.2 million medically treated injuries. In 2007 the cost was \$33 billion in lost productivity and \$4 billion in medical treatment, according to the Journal of Preventive Medicine, he reported. Trauma and violence affects all of us, if only through the cost of health care, Rich stated.

Rich pointed out that black men suffer from many ill health issues. In fact, they have the worst health status of any other race-sex group, he explained. They have the second lowest life expectancy at birth, second only to Native American men. Black men have the highest death rate from all causes and the highest death rate from cancer, cardiovascular disease, and homicide. They also have the highest rates of sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV. Showing data from 1975-2007 that revealed an increase in the life expectancy of all Americans, Rich noted that the life expectancy for black men "still lags behind in a troubling way."

In addition, 10 percent of black men between the ages of 16-29 are incarcerated and in 2005 almost 20 percent of this same age group is unemployed. These numbers are worse now with the current economic downturn. According to recent Department of Labor statistics, the unemployment rate for black men reached Great Depression proportions of 34.5 percent in October 2009, more than three times the rate for the general population.

This led Rich to discuss the social context of stigma for black men. They are: more likely to be stopped, mistreated and killed by the police; more likely to face discrimination in hiring; and more likely to be depicted in dehumanized or objectified ways in the media. Further, stigma is more likely to follow them into the health care system; and there is a lack of willingness to separate

the victim and the perpetrator.

Rich noted that he has observed the tendency toward the belief that "all victims must be perpetrators." Within the health care system there is still this dichotomy of how young black men who are victims of trauma and violence are approached by the professionals there. This is an ongoing concern because of the rise of recurring violence, he explained.

### Why the Narrative Method?

Through talking with the young men, Rich realized that what was his "normal" was not "normal" for these young people. Therefore, he could not draw upon his own understanding to put together the questions for his research to examine the experience of violent injury from the perspective of the victim. He decided to use a research methodology that employed open interviews and qualitative analysis of the data.

According to Rich, predictors of recurrent injury include such factors: African American male, unemployment, lack of medical insurance, income less than \$10,000, current drug use, past/present drug dealing, positive toxic screening for psychoactive substances, incident related to "dissing" or disrespect, prior incarceration, weapon carrying, past psychological trauma, unsafe neighborhoods, and numerous other factors.

The key themes that emerged from the research included: respect and code of the street, mistrust of police, and traumatic stress which manifested itself through self-medicating and weapons. The themes, said Rich, suggest more complexity than the assumption that "these were just bad people behaving badly."

He talked about what it means to be a "sucker." It is not defined as being gullible as is thought by many, but is what happens when you lose respect. According to one of his research subjects, "a sucker is a person that if someone says something to them or does something to them they just sit there and take it and don't retaliate. If you are living in the inner city you wouldn't want to be a sucker because everybody will take advantage of you."

Rich referenced Elijah Anderson's Code of the Streets which is defined as: "In the inner-city environment respect on the street may be viewed as a form of social capital that is very valuable especially when other forms of capital have been denied or are unavailable. Not only is it protective; it often forms the core of the person's self-esteem, particularly when alternative avenues of self expression are closed or cease to be."

### PTSD

Rich related that what was most compelling and surprising was the role of traumatic stress association with trauma and violence. These symptoms that are common in combat veterans and victims of sexual assault are present in every form in these young people, he explained. They include: hyper-vigilance, jumpiness, depression, avoidance, nightmares, flashbacks, insomnia, generalized anxiety, emotional issues. Sixty-five percent of their follow-up patients met the full criteria for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Another prominent symptom of great concern to Rich and his colleagues is the blunting of emotion or dissociation that the young men experienced after the trauma, which has implications for safety and the inability to feel fear or love. There is a disruptive sense of safety, Rich explained. As a form of self-treatment, many of the men turn to weapons. "Traumatized young people with a disruptive sense of safety, who obtain weapons or get involved in an illicit economy, increases their risk for re-injury." They lack the ability to move away, avoid public transportation or "stay in the house." Rich sees this as an alternative explanation to the notion that "these are bad people doing badly or sick people acting out their sickness."

Self-medication and weapons are rooted in intrusive symptoms and hyper-arousal, he explained. For the most part, Rich asserted, patients and providers do not make this connection between their behavior and the symptoms the young men are having. This disconnect arises in part due to the lack of education among providers about the presence of these symptoms. That means we lose a window

of opportunity to intervene in that vulnerable moment, Rich lamented. From the clinical perspective, there is an opportunity to tell people they may have these symptoms after they leave the hospital. He pointed out that in most emergency departments, if an individual comes in with a violent injury, nine out of ten times they are not admitted to the hospital. Most of the time, Rich explained, no one talks to you about your safety - "it is not reimbursed, nor is it part of the protocol."

Rich observed that since conducting this research he has an appreciation for the narrative. In medical schools, doctors are taught to get information and not stories. The stories take too long. Yet, for providers, hearing stories are humanizing, and may reveal complexities that they do not learn by simply asking questions. More important, it lets doctors hear from people whose experience is least like their own. Rich noted that telling stories, particularly about difficult circumstances, is a way of healing, creating order and containing emotions for those telling the stories.

### **Childhood Adversity, the Most Important Predictor of Chronic Disease?**

Rich turned his discussion to the Adverse Childhood Study (ACE) funded by the CDC. ACE is the largest study of its kind and has almost 18,000 participants. The study examines the health and social aspects of adverse childhood experiences over the lifespan. The majority of the participants are middle class white Americans over the age of 50 (77 percent white and 72 percent attended college). The study defined abuse as physical and psychological abuse by parents, sexual abuse by anyone, and emotional and physical neglect. It also looked at household conditions which included: substance abuse, mental illness, parental separation and divorce, mother treated violently, and imprisoned household member. Witnessing violence in the street was not included in the survey, Rich pointed out.

One-third of this middle-class population had none of these, 25 percent had two or more, and 16 percent had a score of four or more. Most provocative, he explained, was that there was a strong dose-response relationship between the number of childhood adversities and diseases and conditions: smoking, COPD, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, hepatitis, and alcoholism. There is also a strong direct relationship with substance abuse, attempted suicide, victimization, teen pregnancy, fractures, promiscuity, sexually-transmitted diseases, poor job performance, poor self-rated health, and poor relationships. "That makes childhood adversity the most important predictor of chronic disease that we know," Rich asserted. Prolonged stress becomes "toxic" triggers for emotional, behavioral, and physiological responses. He pointed out that the mechanisms are still under study. "Stress is greater for those at the lower end of the social ladder," he added.

Returning to his discussion of young men, Rich noted that trauma and exposure to violence and PTSD lead to psychological altercations including poor coping and anxiety, hostility, biological altercations, including dysfunction of fight or flight mechanisms, depressed immune function and potential changes in brain development in the hippocampus, which is responsible for learning and memory. Health risk behaviors such as violence, retaliation, smoking and substance abuse interacting with each other are the cause of morbidity and mortality. He emphasized that personal, social and cultural factors influence this relationship. "There is a broader context in which we ought to discuss childhood adversity and violence," Rich concluded.

## **Peace Institute Holds Session on Youth Violence and Extremism**

On January 19, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) held a briefing on "Youth Violence and Extremism." Speaking at the event were USIP fellows, Marc Sommers, Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow, and Colonel J.M. Venhaus, Jennings Randolph Army Fellow.

Sommers said a characteristic of societies where war occurs is a large male youth population and weak governmental institutions. While there is a correlation between large numbers of youth and political instability, he noted that large male youth populations are not necessarily the cause of such instability.

More important than the number of youth in a country, according to Sommers, is the level of alienation of youth from society both in real and perceived terms. Although in terms of demographics youth dominate these countries, they act as if they are a marginalized minority. He said a key problem facing these societies is that many marginalized young males eventually become "failed adults." They face adulthood pressures to own land, build a house and get a job, but are often unable to do all these things that are crucial for them to be seen as adults in their communities. Their failure to achieve these adult status activities stagnate their social growth and prevents them from marrying and becoming full members of their communities.

Venhaus, who has done research in the Middle East on why young men join extremist groups, sought to dispel misconceived notions of who these young men are. He said that those who join these groups are not crazy, not overly religious before they join, and most aren't from poor backgrounds.

Young males typically join extremist groups, Venhaus explained, because they are "seeking something." He categorized these "seekers" into four groups: revenge seeker, status seeker, identity seeker and thrill seeker. He said revenge seekers are angry, but often don't know why, but they are looking to target that anger. Status seekers are looking for a recognition of their perceived talents, a way to demonstrate to others how smart and valuable they are. Identity seekers are looking to belong, looking to establish an identity as part of something larger. And the final and smallest group is thrill seekers who are just looking for adventure and fun. And while Venhaus admits that most young men could fall into these categories, the difference between most young men and those who join extremist groups is in the options available, other outside influences and who interacts with them first and makes that connection.

Both Sommers and Venhaus agreed that governments and other leadership in these countries needs to engage their youth populations. Sommers advised governments to listen to their youth and engage them in ways that involve them in the decision making process. Venhaus suggested increasing the U.S. government role, using information and media more effectively to counteract messaging by terrorist groups. This is crucial, they indicated, not only for the countries with large marginalized youth populations, but also for protecting America against future would-be terrorist martyrs.

## How Schools Cope With Budget Reductions Focus of AEI/Fordham Institute Event

Frederick M. Hess, American Enterprise Institute (AEI) director of education policy studies, and Eric Osberg, vice president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, have commissioned ten papers to explore how public schools can cut costs and continue efforts to enhance student achievement despite smaller budgets. The report's authors presented their draft papers at a joint AEI and Thomas B. Fordham Institute conference on January 11.

Referring to the budget crisis that public schools currently face, Hess said "this is not just a crisis we need to just get through. We are in this for the long haul." He speculated that: "The funding situation for schools could be a lot grimmer in the coming decades." The economic downturn of the past two years has led to reduced state and local tax revenues. This in turn has resulted in statewide resource reductions which have forced public schools across the country to make drastic budget cuts. A recent National Council of State Legislators report finds that half of the states are anticipating a cumulative shortfall of \$144.8 billion for the fiscal year 2010. Public schools currently rely on \$600 billion in funding they receive from local, state, and federal governments. Unfortunately with budgets at all levels of government under increasing strain, public schools may find themselves in a severe budget crunch for several years to come.

In addition, the authors noted that as real estate prices remain stagnant and retiring teachers and their pensions put more economic pressure on budgets, school districts will have to do more than

just make cosmetic changes like eliminating after school programs and field trips to cut costs. With continued pressure to improve student academic achievement, the big unanswered question at the moment is the effect these budget constraints will have and what alternative revenue solutions are available?

For more information about the event and draft copies of the papers go to: <http://www.aei.org/event/100164>.

## HUD's OPD&R Offers Sabbatical-In-Residence

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) seeks scholars and academics for its Sabbatical-in-Residence program. Through this program, researchers on sabbatical have the opportunity to work within PD&R and support HUD staff to advance current policy.

The Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research (PD&R) is the principal advisor to the Secretary on overall Departmental policy, program evaluation, and research. This responsibility includes analyzing and recommending new and revised policies, programs and legislative proposals; developing a robust, comprehensive research agenda and administering this program through technical and experimental studies and demonstrations; providing economic intelligence and analysis for Departmental use; and serving as the focal point within the Department for coordination of research and program evaluation with other federal agencies, public and private organizations, the housing industry and financial markets, as well as international organizations and other countries. Raphael Bostic, who spoke at the 2009 COSSA annual meeting is the current head of PD&R.

The Department, with the President's endorsement, has identified several national challenges in the economic, social and energy areas that will require a more expansive role for housing and community development. HUD is interested in engaging researchers with specific knowledge and expertise to advance policy development in each of the following areas:

**Multifamily Housing Finance:** While the impact of the housing crisis on the single-family ownership product has received considerable focus, much less attention has been given to the plight of multifamily properties and its market segment. In light of the fact that this segment of the real estate market is experiencing significant stresses, HUD is interested in engaging researchers with knowledge and experience in studying this property type.

**Affordable Housing Finance:** The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) has become a collateral victim of the housing crisis. Many of the largest investors no longer significantly participate in the program, with the result being a large decline in the price for tax credits. Consequently, developers and state agencies find themselves with projects that are not financially viable. The Department seeks researchers with research expertise in affordable housing finance and production as well as with the preservation of affordable rental housing.

**Cost-Effectiveness:** The recent declining economic times and scarce federal resources for discretionary federal programs have increased the importance of finding ways to maximize the cost-effectiveness of HUD's programs. One dimension of this is trying to understand how the provision of housing results in cost savings in other federal, state and local programs. Researchers with interests or agendas focusing on this issue are desired.

**Elderly Issues:** With the aging of the baby boomers and the problems facing current seniors, the ability to identify adequate and affordable housing options has become a critical housing issue. Current projections indicate that 70 percent of people currently turning 65 will need long-term care or supportive services at some point during their remaining lifetime. In a recent survey of

over one million elderly households, health and housing issues related to growing older surfaced demonstrating concerns where HUD could benefit from additional expertise. HUD seeks researchers with agendas on housing and elderly populations, including service provision and issues associated with aging in place.

**Sustainability:** HUD is interested in identifying researchers with an expertise regarding how the implementation of particular zoning, land use, and coordinated transportation/housing planning strategies translate into behavioral changes among the citizenry. In addition, those with a background involving the study of how sustainable development and living principles affect social interactions and personal choices are encouraged to apply for this opportunity.

While these issues are current priorities, HUD welcomes applications from candidates with expertise and interests in other areas.

OPD&R will make assignments in the Sabbatical-in-Residence program under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Mobility Program which enables the placement of employees of institutions of higher education and other non-profits within HUD. This assignment is full-time for a period ranging from three months to up to one year. The applicants are responsible for all salary, travel, housing and other related provisions.

To receive full consideration for this opportunity, interested applicants should prepare and submit a brief statement outlining their specific skill and knowledge related to the current challenges facing the Department and to the applicable area of focus identified above and explain how your experience would be beneficial. Applicants must also detail their college/university sabbatical rules and regulations.

**Completed application material should be submitted by March 1, 2010 via e-mail to: [PD&RIPASabbaticalprogram@hud.gov](mailto:PD&RIPASabbaticalprogram@hud.gov).** For any questions, please contact Ms. Jacqueline Buford, Director, Management and Administrative Services Division, (202) 202-402-5832.

## Application Deadline Extended To 1/27/10 for NIH/OBSSR Summer Training Institute

The Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) at the National Institute of Health (NIH) has extended the deadline for applications to its summer training institute on randomized clinical trials involving behavioral interventions until midnight, January 27, 2010. The institute is scheduled from July 11-23, 2010.

The objective of the summer training institute is to provide a thorough grounding in the conduct of randomized clinical trials to researchers and health professionals interested in developing competence in the planning, design, and execution of randomized clinical trials involving behavioral interventions. The curriculum is designed to enable participants to:

- Describe the principles underlying the conduct of unbiased clinical trials.
- Identify the unique challenges posed by behavioral randomized clinical trials (RCTs).
- Evaluate alternative RCT designs in terms of their appropriateness to scientific and clinical goals.
- Select appropriate strategies for enrollment, randomization, and retention of participants.
- Understand methods for monitoring, coordinating, and conducting RCTs.
- Develop strategies for appropriate statistical analyses of RCT data.
- Evaluate the quality of behavioral RCTs and interpret their results.
- Design a RCT research project in collaboration with a scientific team.

Priority will be given to individuals who have received their Ph.D. or M.D. (or equivalent degrees) not later than July 2008. Applicants must have at least two years of subsequent research experience. Applicants should not yet have achieved a tenured position at their institution. (The typical past participant has had four to five years of research experience.) Beyond these eligibility criteria, OBSSR is seeking researchers who have demonstrated research potential and experience and who will clearly benefit from behavioral randomized controlled trial training. The ideal candidate will have prior experience, and will be actively pursuing an independent research career, in behavioral randomized clinical trials.

Further, those who have extensive research experience will only be considered after more junior investigators have been evaluated. Preference will also be given to individuals who are not NIH employees. Exceptional applicants who do not meet the above criteria will be considered and may even be accepted, however, priority will go to those who do meet the criteria.

Applicants must be citizens or non-citizen nationals of the United States, or must have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence. Women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

All application materials must be submitted online and are due by midnight (EST) January 27, 2010. Instructions and the application form are posted at: <http://blsweb.net/obsrapp2attend2010/>.

## University of Connecticut Newest COSSA Member

COSSA is pleased to announce that the University of Connecticut has joined the Consortium. We are grateful for the University's support and look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

### Consortium of Social Science Associations

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Address all inquiries to COSSA at [newsletters@cossa.org](mailto:newsletters@cossa.org)

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