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House Passes FY 2013 Appropriations Bill to Keep Government Open Past March 27; Senate Action This Week

With the sequester occurring on March 1 and the release of the President's FY 2014 proposed budget now expected in early April, the Congress turned its attention to the March 27 expiration of the Continuing Resolution (CR) that has kept government programs funded since the start of FY 2013 on October 1, 2012.

With House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) declaring that the doors of the government will stay open past March 27, on March 6, the House of Representatives voted 267-151 to approve H.R. 933, the Department of Defense, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013. The bill is the House's vehicle for completing the FY 2013 Appropriations process. It provides the necessary funding until the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 2013.

The bill accepts the sequester, thus limiting discretionary spending for FY 2013 to $984 billion, down from the $1.043 trillion cap assumption in the earlier versions of the FY 2013 spending bills. The bill provides the Departments of Defense and Veterans' Affairs the power to make choices among their programs with regard to spending. For almost all of the rest of the government's agencies and programs funding will remain at the FY 2012 level for all accounts. One exception is the National Agricultural Statistical Service, which will be funded at $179.5 million, a significant $20 million increase over FY 2012. Of the $179.5 million, $62.5 million will fund the Census of Agriculture, which is at the peak of its five-year cycle in FY 2013.

In the meantime, Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) is trying to provide all government departments and agencies the opportunity for more flexibility in their FY 2013 spending. She expects to unveil her proposed legislation the week of March 11.

Towards the end of 2012, some in the Senate and House were pushing to pass separate appropriations bills for FY 2013. The effort did not succeed as the year wound down and concern over raising the debt ceiling took precedence. The death of Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HA), former Appropriations panel chairman, complicated this further. Among those spending bills ready for consideration was the Commerce, Science, Justice Appropriations (CJS) bill, which provides funding for the National Science Foundation, the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Mikulski expects these separate bills will become part of her package, although the new versions would most likely need to accept the sequester.

The enactment of this package, including the CJS bill, will not come easily. Congress intends to leave town on March 22 for Easter/Passover recess. Getting a separate bill through the Senate, reconciling it with the House, and bringing the White House on board is a tall task. Stay tuned!

Duplication, Sequestration Main Themes of Appropriations Hearing with Public Health Research Agencies

On March 5, the leaders of five federal public health research agencies gathered to answer questions from the House Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS) Appropriations Subcommittee, the first time such a panel has been convened. In attendance were Francis Collins, National Institutes of Health (NIH), Tom Frieden, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Carolyn Clancy, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Patrick Conway, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and Mary Wakefield, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Subcommittee chairman Rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA) brought up the issue of redundancy in his opening remarks, suggesting, "We want all of the agencies to review programs and propose eliminations in terms of duplications and errant and straying from the normal mission statements." Ranking member Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) expressed concern about the impacts of sequestration and steep cuts, noting, "It's my hope that the discussion will serve to demonstrate the irrationality of the budget policies currently being pursued by the House majority."

National Institutes of Health

Collins (testimony) discussed NIH's mission to "seek fundamental knowledge and apply it in ways that enhance human health, lengthen life, and reduce suffering." He noted the progress made in reducing mortality from stroke, cancer, and HIV/AIDS, as well as new research toward a universal influenza vaccine. Kingston began a line of questioning about duplication among the different agencies, specifically with regard to health services research. Collins noted that there is a lot of coordination among the agencies and explained that NIH's role is to conduct scientifically rigorous large-scale, randomized clinical trials. AHRQ, on the other hand, can conduct broader analyses of published studies and methods currently in use and draw conclusions based on that. And the CDC can work with state and local agencies to implement best practices. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN) asked about the proliferation of interagency working groups committees. Collins noted that such groups enhance collaboration and coordination among the HHS agencies. Responding to concerns about duplication and waste, Collins argued, "We get this is a time where budgets are extremely tight. We would not be happy about the idea of wasting a single dollar right now."

DeLauro asked about the impact of sequestration. Collins noted that NIH will see a $1.545 billion cut in FY 13. He emphasized the impact of cuts on the next generation of scientists-- both those who are just starting out and will have difficulty finding jobs and funding and students who might be discouraged from even pursuing a career in science. Rep. David Joyce (R-OH) followed up on those concerns and asked what NIH is doing to ensure the future of biomedical scientists. Collins noted "these are not easy times for people coming to join us." He discussed a program that would allow young, talented scientists go directly from their Ph.D.s to an independent position, as well as new programs that aim to build diversity in the bioscience workforce.

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) asked for more information about efforts to increase diversity and whether these efforts could help decrease overall health disparities among minorities. Collins noted that NIH will be devoting substantial funds to this effort, in spite of current budget conditions and highlighted a program to help undergraduates from diverse backgrounds have research experiences and a national research mentoring network aimed at scientists from underrepresented groups. Appropriations committee ranking member Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY) expressed concern about how the current budget climate will impact America's global competitiveness. Collins noted that other countries, following the U.S.'s lead, have vastly increased their science and research funding, are shocked to hear how little support the U.S. is giving to research.

Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD) questioned Collins about a recent study by an NIH-funded researcher, which found a connection between the Tea Party and the tobacco industry. Noting he was "quite troubled" by the paper, Collins pointed out that it was written without the encouragement of NIH and described a tension between preventing research into political topics and "playing nanny" for its researchers. Unfortunately, Collins did not explain that the research that led to this controversial paper came out of NIH-supported research (subsequently mandated by a 2001 Executive Order) attempting to study millions of previously inaccessible internal tobacco industry documents, which contain information about the health consequences of tobacco use, cigarette design, tobacco marketing to particular demographic groups (including young people), the determinates of tobacco use, and how the industry has worked to undermine public health efforts that effectively reduce tobacco use. Access to these documents was granted as a result of landmark tobacco litigation.

DeLauro also asked for comment on the progress of the National Center for Advancing Translational Science (NCATS), which Collins described as "a really wonderful enterprise," which is "embraced by virtually all the sectors that are touched upon."

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Frieden ([testimony]) noted that "CDC is at the forefront of finding and stopping the spread of threats to health," citing its recent efforts in containing the 2011 outbreak of listeria and last year's fungal meningitis outbreak. Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) asked about the "evaluation tap" mechanism, which takes a percentage of HHS agencies' budgets to fund programs that perform evaluative functions, including some CDC programs (the National Center for Health Statistics, the National Center for Occupational Safety and Health, and basic surveys) and AHRQ. Simpson wondered if those programs were actually evaluative. Frieden noted that the programs coordinate work so it is not done in multiple places and produce definitive information for evaluating programs' effectiveness.

Harris suggested areas in which he felt there was duplication among the agencies, such as patient safety research, obesity and telemedicine, although he did not allow panelists to discuss their agencies' differing functions and approaches. Rep. Steve Womack (R-AR) also wondered about redundancy, asking how the agencies work together to avoid duplicating their research efforts. Frieden cited HIV treatment as an example of the agencies coordinating their efforts. NIH developed drugs, HRSA funding provides access to them, and CDC monitors efforts and assists in HIV prevention. Kingston criticized the CDC's community transformation grants, which allow communities to work toward specific outcomes (such as better school food, decreased tobacco use, etc.), calling them "pseudoscience." He also called for clarity on guidelines regarding sodium.

In response to DeLauro's question about the impact of sequestration, Frieden observed, "The threats to our health aren't decreasing by five percent." Frieden noted that CDC will face a cut of about $300 million, but that much of the CDC's funding goes to state and local entities, which are already coping with reductions in their budgets. The cuts will impact work on flu, HIV, autism, asthma, outbreak response, and international threats. Lee asked about the sequester's impact on the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program, which aims to eliminate health disparities. Frieden said the same five percent cut would apply to that program, but stressed that CDC has made eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities a focus. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) asked whether the sequestration will hurt some communities more than others, citing an outbreak of tuberculosis among homeless people in Los Angeles. Frieden noted that it will be hard to predict who will feel the impact most because "the spread of infectious diseases knows no boundaries."

Lowey asked for an update on the Diabetes Prevention Program and an explanation of how the different agencies are working together. Frieden noted that this is a partnership with NIH, which created a small-scale program targeting people with pre-diabetes that decreased their risk of acquiring diabetes by 58 percent. The CDC has worked with partner organizations to create a low-cost way to broadly implement that program. They verify that the providers are adhering to the NIH's model. Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA) asked about efforts to combat hepatitis B and C. Frieden said that CDC is working CMS, AHRQ, and HRSA to increase access to testing and has created a public awareness campaign. Rep. Rodney Alexander (R-LA) asked about the CDC's role in food-borne illness outbreaks. Frieden noted that one tool the CDC uses to trace outbreaks, PulseNet, is old and in need of replacement. However, in the current budgetary climate, that is unlikely to happen.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Clancy ([testimony]) noted that "AHRQ is the only federal agency whose sole mission is improving health care." She highlighted AHRQ's work on reducing health care-associated infections, health care teams, and simulation as a training method.

Regarding Simpson's question on whether funds from the evaluation tap go toward evaluative programs, Clancy noted AHRQ has no control over its funding mechanism, but it does support research that evaluates "how health care is delivered and how we could make it better." In response to Womack's question about how the agencies cooperate to avoid duplication, Clancy used the example of health care-associated infections. AHRQ used research from NIH and CDC to design a study that was successful in dramatically decreasing the rate of these infections. Fleischmann asked about how health information is disseminated. Clancy noted that AHRQ plays a big role in spreading health information and is granted new authority by the Affordable Care Act to spread information about patient-centered outcomes. She noted that AHRQ is "really cheap and efficient" and works with partners that clinicians trust.

Noting that the subcommittee voted to eliminate AHRQ last year, DeLauro asked Clancy what would have been lost if the agency no longer existed. Clancy argued that it is "a new day among health professionals in terms of their excitement about improving health care," which would be lost if AHRQ were eliminated. She pointed out that it is the only agency to focus on improving the health care as a system.

Health Resources and Services Administration

Wakefield (testimony) testified that more than 3,100 local organizations receive HRSA grants to provide health care and training to millions of people. She highlighted funding of community health centers, the National Health Service Corps, and the Ryan White Program, which provides access to AIDS medication.

Responding to DeLauro's question about the impact of the sequester, Wakefield used HRSA's AIDS Drug Assistance Program as an illustration. She said that the cuts will prevent the program from serving 7,400 patients. Since 2011, the program has tackled a waiting list of 9,300 people and whittled it down to 63. Wakefield expressed concern that under sequestration, that waiting list could climb back up.

Roybal-Allard asked about the fate of the advisory committee established by the Newborn Screening Act, which recommends screenings and interventions for genetic diseases and which is set to sunset unless the Act is reauthorized. Roybal-Allard wanted to know if there was a mechanism to keep the committee in place until a reauthorization is passed. Wakefield agreed that the committee's work is "critically important" and noted that meetings are being moved in anticipation of the committee's sunset. In the meantime, HRSA is looking at available options to extend the committee.

DeLauro asked about the maternal and child health block grant, which has had its appropriation cut. Wakefield noted that the program matches state funds, so the effect of cuts could be multiplied. She called it an "extremely important investment, to help drive down rates of infant mortality," but noted that work still needs to be done in reducing disparities between African American children and white children.

House Panels Hold Hearing on Cybersecurity; Hear About Importance of Human Behavior Research

On February 26th, the House Science, Space, and Technology's (SST) Subcommittees on Technology and Subcommittee on Research held a Joint Hearing on "Cybersecurity R&D Challenges and Solutions." In addition to discussions of new technologies to combat cyberattacks against both the U.S. government and the private sector, the panels heard about the need for more research on human behavior.

The hearing also focused on legislation introduced by Reps. Michael McCaul (R-TX) and the Subcommittee on Research's Ranking Member Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL). The bill, the "Cybersecurity Enhancement Act," (H.R. 756), according to SST Chairman Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), coordinates research and development activities to better address evolving cyber threats. It includes support for research and development to help create new technologies and standards that better protect America's information technology systems. It also adds "social and behavioral factors, including human-computer interactions, usability, and user motivations" to the list of research subjects eligible for support.

Lipinski enhanced this idea further in his opening statement at the hearing: "I need to emphasize the importance of research into the social and behavioral aspects of cybersecurity. People are perhaps the most significant part of our IT infrastructure, but they are also the 'weakest link.' Many cyber attacks are successful because of human error-- bad cyber hygiene-- such as unwittingly opening a malicious email. Having the most sophisticated security systems available won't make any difference if users don't change factory-set default passwords or they set easy to crack passwords. Understanding the human element and educating users to practice good cyber hygiene is necessary to combating threats and reducing risk."

The witnesses at the hearing were: Michael Barrett, Chief Information Security Officer, PayPal, Inc.; Frederick R. Chang, President and Chief Operating Officer, 21CT, Inc.; and Terry Benzel, Deputy Director Cyber Networks and Cyber Security, USC Information Sciences Institute. All echoed Lipinski.

In his testimony and in responding to questions from Research Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Larry Bucshon (R-IN), Barrett noted: "In particular, we are very appreciative and supportive of the following provisions within the legislation...Section 104-- Social and behavioral research in cybersecurity: This section is well aligned with a number of our efforts and our recommendations in terms of areas that need additional research. In particular, we think that Human Computer Interaction (HCI) topics in security are a new frontier and we applaud the Committee for their consideration of these issues."

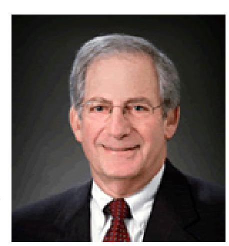
Chang testified that "hackers often use 'social engineering' to trick computer operators to divulge sensitive information that can be used to compromise a system (e.g. a password). These tactics can be extremely effective and much easier to accomplish than a technical compromise." In addition, he continued, there are a set of well-known cognitive biases that people use to assess risk and make decisions. Therefore, Chang declared, "Gaining a much richer understanding of the cognitive biases at work in the context of decision-making in cyberspace would just be one of many important issues that need research at the intersection of psychology and cybersecurity."

Chang also expressed his belief that an interdisciplinary research approach is necessary. In addition to computer science and psychology, other disciplines such as economics, biology, medicine, physics, political science and more "can add much research to the dialogue," he concluded.

Benzel, a former Vice President at McAfee, reinforced Chang's call for more support for interdisciplinary research on cybersecurity. This area is "no longer solely an engineering discipline. It requires deep involvement from economists, sociologists, anthropologists and other scientists to create the holistic research agendas that can anticipate and guide effective cyber-defense strategies," she argued. Benzel also made clear that industry cannot take on this research agenda by itself. It needs federal government involvement from the National Science Foundation and the Department of Homeland Security, she asserted.

The SST Committee hopes to mark up the McCaul-Lipinski legislation in the near future.

Ed Sondik to Leave NCHS



Edward Sondik announced his plans to retire and step down as Director of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which he has led for 17 years. Before joining NCHS in 1996, Sondik worked at the National Cancer Institute and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. In a message to staff, CDC Director Tom Freiden praised Sondik's leadership and his "unwavering dedication to data and science as the cornerstone of effective public health action." On April 1, Charles J. Rothwell, current head of NCHS's Division of Vital Statistics, will take over as Acting Director as CDC begins its search for a replacement.

AHRQ Report Identifies 22 Ways to Make Health Care Safer

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released a new evidence report: Making Health Care Safer II: An Updated Critical Analysis of the Evidence for Patient Safety Practices. The report updates a 2001 report and assesses the current evidence regarding the outcomes of patient safety practices. An international panel of experts analyzed 41 patient safety practices and identified 22 strategies that are ready for immediate adoption. Ten strategies are "strongly encouraged" based on the strength of evidence (the remaining 12 are "encouraged"):

1. Preoperative checklists and anesthesia checklists to prevent operative and postoperative events.
2. Bundles that include checklists to prevent central line-associated bloodstream infections.
3. Interventions to reduce urinary catheter use, including catheter reminders, stop orders, or nurse-initiated removal protocols.
4. Bundles that include head-of-bed elevation, sedation vacations, oral care with chlorhexidine, and subglottic-suctioning endotracheal tubes to prevent ventilator-associated pneumonia.
5. Hand hygiene.
6. "Do Not Use" list for hazardous abbreviations.
7. Multicomponent interventions to reduce pressure ulcers.
8. Barrier precautions to prevent healthcare-associated infections.
9. Use of real-time ultrasound for central line placement.
10. Interventions to improve prophylaxis for venous thromboembolisms.

NSF Seeks Proposals to Transform Neuroscience and Cognitive Science

Responding to report language in its FY 2012 appropriations bill sponsored by Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-PA), the National Science Foundation (NSF) has issued a Dear Colleague Letter seeking proposals that accelerate new integrative research across disciplines and across spatial and temporal scales of analysis in cognitive science and neuroscience. Such approaches will enhance understanding of how the brain regulates the individual's biology, processes complex social and physical cues, and allows organisms to behave in and adapt to changing environments. **Proposals should reach NSF by June 1.**

According to NSF, research aimed at understanding the brain is currently supported by virtually all of the disciplinary Directorates within the National Science Foundation (see Directorate web pages for details). For example, NSF currently funds research to better understand:

- the genetic, molecular, and cellular mechanisms responsible for brain evolution, development, function, and behavior **(Biological Sciences)**;
- neural coding, signal processing, and computation; cognitive aspects of human-device interactions; brain-machine interfaces; computational neuroscience; representation and learning; and technology to support human learning **(Computer & Information Science & Engineering)**;
- brain function, neural coding, cellular/genetic mechanisms underlying neuron cell behaviors, technologies for neuroregeneration and rehabilitation, neuroimaging/sensing, and the brain-computer interface **(Engineering)**;
- STEM learning, in ways that may either inform or can be informed by neuroscience and STEM education, including brain structure/function relations, neural networks, computational neuroscience, functional imaging, neuroplasticity, and adaptive systems **(Education and Human Resources)**;
- the biophysical dynamics and chemical underpinnings of neural processes, and mathematical, statistical, and computational modeling at all analytical scales of brain function **(Mathematical and Physical Sciences)**; and
- cognitive science and the neuroscience of cognition and behavior (such as language, thought, decision making, and social processes), using behavioral, neuroscience, and computational methods **(Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences)**.

However, NSF now is specifically encouraging the submission of proposals that emphasize integration across scales within one discipline, or across multiple research disciplines in neuroscience and cognitive science. It also hopes to stimulate projects that demonstrate innovation and creativity; leverage interdisciplinary approaches and knowledge; and advance the boundaries of science. Such proposals are welcome across four broad thematic areas:

1. Adaptation to changing environments
2. Mechanisms underlying dynamic decisions and communication within and across scales
3. Neural representations and coding
4. Technologies for discovering, analyzing and modeling brain function, neural coding, and circuits

Proposals, including those focused on data issues, tools, and technology, may address one or more of the above thematic areas.

Principal Investigators are free to choose among the following mechanisms to support their integrative/interdisciplinary research, and research collaboration proposals in the thematic areas described above. The mechanisms are:

Research Coordination Networks (RCN) awards are designed to build human capital platforms and provide the infrastructure for stimulating innovative communication. RCNs should focus on scientific areas that cross disciplinary boundaries, to promote dialogue and collaborations between researchers (NSF 13-520). Regardless of the specific scientific focus of the proposed collaboration, SBE RCN proposals should be submitted to one of the following programs in the Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences: Perception, Action, and Cognition; or Cognitive Neuroscience. BIO RCN proposals can be submitted to various programs in the Neural Systems Cluster or the Behavioral Systems Cluster (within the Division of Integrative Organismal Systems).

Early Concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER) are used to support exploratory work in its early stages on untested, but potentially transformative, research ideas or approaches. This work may be considered especially high-risk, high-payoff. As with all EAGER proposals, PIs must contact the relevant program director first to discuss the appropriateness of their research ideas.

An alternative funding opportunity, open equally to all NSF-supported areas of science is Integrated NSF Support Promoting Interdisciplinary Research and Education (INSPIRE, solicitation NSF 13-518). INSPIRE supports bold, interdisciplinary, potentially transformative research projects at a larger scale and duration than EAGER grants.

For more information contact Amber Story, astory@nsf.gov or 703/292-7249.

Board on Environmental Change Discusses Climate Change Adaptation

With President Obama asserting that during his second term climate change will become a focus of the Administration, the National Academies' Board on Environmental Change and Society (BECS) met on March 4 for an experts' meeting that focused on the state of climate change adaptation efforts. Representatives from federal agencies gave their perspective on the successes and challenges of building our resilience to a changing climate. The Board will meet again on March 15 to discuss the U.S. Global Change Research Program and Social Science Knowledge.

Susan Ruffo, Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, argued that building resilience to climate change is part of responsible risk management; it will reduce suffering and economic losses in the wake of climate events and allow the government to continue to fulfill its commitments. In 2009, the President created the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force to assist with adaptation efforts. The task force is co-chaired by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and is comprised of representatives from more than 20 federal agencies.

The federal government can assist adaptation efforts in two ways, Ruffo argued. First, it plays a supporting role in decisions made by state and local governments, through both financial and informational assistance. Second, the federal government can directly promote adaptation in the significant amount of U.S. land it owns. As mandated by executive order, federal agencies are beginning to produce climate change adaptation strategies that aim to "mainstream" adaptation considerations into their general planning and operations. Ruffo suggested that there is a disconnect between the information we have that could assist adaptation efforts and what is needed by on-the-ground decision-makers. She argued that we need to find out a) what information people really need and b) how to get people to use the tools available once we have created them.

Joel Scheraga, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), talked about his agency's experience with its adaptation plan (which is currently available for public comment). The plan consists of two main components: an agency-wide vulnerability assessment and identification of ten priorities for mainstreaming adaptation goals. Scheraga noted that a central theme of the plan is integrating adaptation considerations into the daily work of EPA staff and local partners by increasing awareness and empowering decision making with data, information and tools. Scheraga discussed some barriers the EPA has encountered, noting that despite a lot of planning, not a lot has actually been accomplished on the ground-- and it is difficult to determine why that is. He suggested that scientific uncertainty, unavailable data, legal hurdles, cultural and institutional barriers, and political, behavioral, social, and economic barriers all present challenges to effective adaptation.

Jeffrey Marqusee, Department of Defense (DoD) Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program (SERDP) and Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (ESTCP), noted that the last Quadrennial Defense Review in 2010 made adapting to climate change a priority. Marqusee pointed out that the Defense Department's size make it unique among federal agencies in the impact its adaptation efforts could have. If DoD were a country, it would have a top-40 carbon footprint. He argued that building resilience into its infrastructure ensures that DoD can continue to carry out its mission as the climate changes. Impacts are already being felt in DoD installations in Alaska; the Southwest and Pacific Islands are also areas of concern. Marqusee conceded that decision-makers tend to think of climate change as a long-term, future problem and that they sometimes have trouble considering the ways that the weather affects their work in the context of broader climate trends. However, he suggested that DoD is used to dealing with uncertainty and has a unique opportunity to make aggressive strides toward resilience.

William Goran, Army Corps of Engineers, spoke about the Army's response to building resilience to climate change. He argued that engineers a need for a way to incorporate change into engineering standards, a framework that incorporates the costs of both action and inaction regarding adaptation measures, better ways to monitor effectiveness of adaptation actions, and ways to translate climate data into potential impacts.

Jeffrey Arnold, Army Corps of Engineers, discussed non-defense aspects of building infrastructure resilience. He noted that climate change mitigation efforts are further along than adaptation efforts-- and that some mitigation strategies could have negative consequences for adaptation. It would therefore be helpful to try to integrate the two approaches where possible. Arnold argued that many of the decision structures that could assist adaptation efforts are hampered by legal barriers, so those looking to create useful tools must know where there is flexibility. He suggested that research is needed to create better tools for valuation and evaluation.

Kevin Werner, NOAA and Sandy Rebuilding Task Force, shared his experiences with working with local partners to facilitate adaptation, both in water management in the Colorado basin and on the Sandy Task Force. He observed that in Colorado, he was able to identify decision points at local agencies more effectively through first-hand observation than by asking directly. He argued that three factors in successful work with local partners are 1) having good relationships, 2) having time for rigorous study and research, and 3) working on a well-focused problem. He felt that all three of these factors are missing in post-Sandy rebuilding efforts, making that work all the more challenging.

Social Workers' Group Has New Leader

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), a COSSA member, has appointed Anthony "Angelo" McClain as its new Chief Executive Officer. He succeeds Elizabeth Clark, who has led the organization since 2001.

McClain joins NASW after serving six years as Commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, a position he was appointed to by Governor Deval Patrick. As Commissioner, he led a Department that addressed reports of abuse and neglect for the state's most vulnerable children, partnering with families to help them better nurture and protect their children. He is also an adjunct faculty member in the Urban Leadership Program at Simmons College Graduate School of Social Work.

Prior to his service in Massachusetts, McClain was Vice President and Executive Director of the New Jersey Division of Child Behavioral Health Service Center (Value Options) where he built and oversaw administrative, clinical and quality management program infrastructures that increased access to behavioral health services for children and youth, including those in the juvenile justice system. He also served as Vice President of Network Management and Regional Operations for the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership. In this position, McClain developed and maintained a provider network capable of delivering high quality, responsive services to 450,000 Mass Health members.

McClain has B.S. in Social Work from West Texas State University, a M.S. in Social Work from the University of Texas at Arlington, and a Ph.D. in Social Work from Boston College Graduate School of Social Work.

The National Association of Social Workers, an $80 million membership association in Washington D.C., has 56 chapters in the United States and abroad. NASW is comprised of several different organizations including a 501 (c)(6) membership organization, a 501 (c)(3) foundation, a political action committee, a policy think tank, a professional press, a legal defense fund, a workforce research center, and a for-profit insurance company. NASW was founded in 1955 and created the social work profession's Code of Ethics.

DBASSE Has Two New Committee Directors

The National Academies' Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE) has appointed two new directors for its Committees. Tom Plewes replaced Barney Cohen at the Committee on Population (CPOP). Cohen left DBASSE in 2012 to become the Chief of the Population Studies Branch at the United Nations. Linda J. Waite, Professor of Sociology, Population Research Center at the University of Chicago, chairs CPOP.

Plewes has been at the NAS' National Research Council for ten years, serving as the study director on a number of projects for the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) where he directed studies on topics such as measuring research and development expenditures in the U.S. economy, improving access to educational data for research and analysis, measuring international trade traffic, and understanding the U.S. agriculture sector. Prior to joining the CNSTAT staff, he was Associate Commissioner for Employment and Unemployment Statistics of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Plewes is a retired Lieutenant General and former Chief of the U.S. Army Reserve. He is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association. Plewes has a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from Hope College and a Master's in Economics from George Washington University.

Arlene Lee takes over the Committee on Law and Justice (CLAJ), replacing Jane Ross, who retired

in 2012. Jeremy Travis, President of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and former Director of the National Institute of Justice, chairs CLAJ.

Lee came to DBASSE from the Center for the Stu dy of Social Policy where she served as director of policy. She has also served as Deputy Director, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at the Georgetown University Public Policy Institute, Executive Director of the Maryland Governor's Office for Children and as Director at the Federal Resource Center on Children of Prisoners. She has a B.A. from Washington College and a J.D. from the American University, Washington College of Law.

Hamilton Project Suggests Rethinking the Federal Budget

The Brooking Institution's Hamilton Project released a book, 15 Ways to Rethink the Federal Budget, comprised of pragmatic, evidence-based proposals from experts in a variety of fields for reforming federal spending. On February 26, the Hamilton Project held an event to discuss 13 of the proposals, those focusing on entitlements, tax reform, and revenues. The event began with a panel discussion on the current state of the budget before moving to the specifics of the proposals. The panel was comprised of Donald Marron, Tax Policy Center, Robert D. Reischauer, President of the Urban Institute and former director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), Alice M. Rivlin, Brookings Institution and former director of the Office of Management and Budget and the CBO, and moderated by Roger C. Altman, Evercore Partners and a former Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. The panelists touched on sequestration, the current political climate, and recent data indicating a slowdown in the rate of increase of health care costs.

The first group of proposals, presented in a panel moderated by Paul Van de Water, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, focused on building an enduring social safety net. Michael Chernew, Harvard Medical School, discussed his proposal, "Transitioning to Bundled Payments in Medicare." He estimated that it would save $100 billion over ten years by providing incentives to treat diseases instead of paying for services. Edward Thomas, Natural Hazard Mitigation Association, proposed "Reforming Federal Support for Risky Development," which would reduce the ten-year deficit by $40 billion by reducing the costs of natural disasters and risks to life and properties for those in disaster-prone areas. Jonathan Gruber, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a key contributor to the development of health care reform for then-Governor Romney and President Obama, suggested "Restructuring Cost Sharing and Supplemental Insurance for Medicare" would save $125 billion over ten years by insuring recipients against high out-of-pocket costs by taxing private supplemental plans. Jeffrey B. Liebman, Harvard University, discussed his proposal, "An Evidence-Based Path to Disability Reform," estimated to reduce the deficit $10-$20 billion over ten years, which would create pilot programs to find solutions to the disability insurance system.

The second panel focused on approaches to tax reform and was moderated by Robert Greenstein, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Joseph E. Aldy, Harvard University, spoke about "Eliminating Fossil Fuel Subsidies," a ten-year savings of $41 billion from leveling the playing field between fossil fuel producers and other industries and increasing U.S. leverage in international fossil fuel subsidy negotiations. Karen Dynan, Brookings, discussed her proposal, "Better Ways to Promote Saving through the Tax System," which would encourage savings by low- and middle-income households while eliminating expensive subsidies for high-income households and would save $40 billion over ten years. Diane Lim, Pew Charitable Trusts, proposed "Limiting Individual Income Tax Expenditures," a $1 trillion ten-year savings, which would more efficiently raise revenue by reducing tax expenditures for middle- and higher-income taxpayers. Alan Viard, American Enterprise Institute, discussed his proposal for "Replacing the Home Mortgage Interest Deduction," reducing the ten-year deficit by $300 billion by reducing the incentive for constructing high-end homes and better targeting the housing tax breaks.

The final panel was moderated by Michael Greenstone, Hamilton Project, and focused on new sources of revenue and efficiency. Tyler Duvall, McKinsey and Company, proposed "Funding

Transportation Infrastructure with User Fees," estimated to save $312 billion over ten years by raising revenue on major roadways and promoting wiser infrastructure investment. Benjamin H. Harris, Urban Institute, suggested "Creating an American Value-Added Tax," which would raise $1.6 trillion over ten years by taxing consumption at five percent. Adele Morris, Brookings, discussed "The Many Benefits of a Carbon Tax," which would save $199 billion over ten years and reduce the buildup of greenhouse gas emissions, replace regulations with market-based incentives, and promote economic activity through reduced regulatory burden and tax rates. Pia Orrenius, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, spoke about her proposal, "Overhauling the Temporary Work Visa System," which would maximize the economic benefits of temporary work visas by allocating them based on market needs and raise revenue from auctions, reducing the ten-year deficit by $7-$12 billion. Philip Swagel, University of Maryland, discussed "Increasing the Role of the Private Sector in Housing Finance," which would reduce the deficit by $134 billion over ten years and improve incentives for risk taking and investment in the mortgage market.

OPPNet – Short-Term Mentored Career Enhancement Award: Cross-Training at the Intersection of Animal Models and Human Investigation

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Basic Behavioral & Social Science Opportunity Network (OppNet) is seeking applications for short-term mentored career enhancement (K18) awards in basic behavioral and social sciences research (b-BSSR). OppNet is a trans-NIH initiative that funds activities to 1) build the collective body of knowledge about the nature of behavior and social systems, and 2) deepen our understanding of basic mechanisms of behavioral and social processes. All 24 NIH Institutes and Centers that fund research and four Program Offices within the NIH Office of the Director (ICOs) co-fund and co-manage OppNet.

Accordingly, NIH recently released a funding opportunity announcement (RFA-DA-14-002) that will support development of research capability in b-BSSR, with specific emphasis on cross-training and establishing collaborations between researchers with expertise in animal models of basic behavioral and social processes and those studying similar or related processes in human subjects. Basic research using any non-human species or with human subjects in laboratory- or field-based settings is appropriate for this FOA. Eligible candidates for this K18 will be either: (a) scientists conducting b-BSSR in animal models who seek training in the study of similar or related behavioral or social processes in humans; or (b) investigators conducting b-BSSR in human subjects who seek training in the study of similar or related processes in animal models. Candidates may be at any rank or level of research/academic development beyond three years of postdoctoral experience.

The opportunities afforded by the announcement include:

- Expose animal model researchers to the unique theoretical, conceptual, methodological and practical issues involved in studying behavior and psychological or social processes with human subjects in laboratory or field-based settings.
- Likewise, expose investigators studying behavior and psychological or social processes with human subjects to the difficult challenges of modeling these phenomena in non-human species.
- Foster the interaction of a mentor-mentee relationship, by supporting a shared research project appropriate to the interests of both individuals. Such a shared project will require discussions and problem solving about diverse environments, measurement systems, species limitations, experimental design and statistical analyses.

It is anticipated that this interaction - on multiple levels including mentoring, discussion, shared research participation, and an academic enrichment plan (if appropriate) - will improve both the development of animal models for human processes and the design of human subject research that draws from, and is amenable to, modeling in experimental animals. It is also expected that cross-training will facilitate future collaborative endeavors between researchers working with human subjects and those employing animal models to study similar behavioral and social processes, thus improving forward-and-back translation between these two approaches.

For the purposes of this FOA, individuals conducting research in animal models may mentor investigators studying similar basic behavioral or social processes in human subjects; conversely, investigators conducting research on basic behavioral or social processes in humans may mentor animal model researchers.

The announcement is not intended as a substitute for research project support. It is expected that either the candidate or the mentor has sufficient research funding to support the proposed shared research project, in excess of the allowable costs of this award. It is not a requirement that the candidate or the proposed mentor receive his/her primary research funding from the NIH.

Any topical area that fits the definition of b-BSSR, as defined by NIH (http://obssr.od.nih.gov/about_obssr/BSSR_CC/BSSR_definition/definition.aspx), is appropriate for support. According to this definition, these topics include, but are not limited to:

- Research on basic behavioral and social processes. Research on behavioral and social processes involves the study of human or animal functioning at the level of the individual, small group, institution, organization, community, or population; the study of the interactions within and between these levels of aggregation; and the study of how environmental factors affect behavioral and social functioning.
- Research on interactions among biological, behavioral and social processes. This topic includes the identification of interacting biological and behavioral or social variables, including studies to determine how these different processes affect each other (i.e., bi-directional, multilevel relationships).
- Research on methodology and measurement in the behavioral and social sciences. This category encompasses the development of new approaches for research design, data collection, measurement, and data analysis. Of particular interest is the development of measures that are comparable across human and animal populations.

OppNet has also identified topics that may be particularly amenable to this type of career enhancement activity. These include but are not limited to: Vocal learning and communication, Non-vocal modalities of communication; Improved technologies and validated measures of behavioral or social processes; Behavioral phenotyping; The transmission of behaviors across generations and among peers; Mechanisms underlying individual differences in basic behavioral or social processes; Emotions (including social emotions) and emotion regulation; Prolonged emotional states (e.g., distress, loss); Component processes underlying more complex behaviors, such as decision-making, self-regulation, cooperation, and competition; Ecologically valid measures and models of psychosocial stress across species and environments; Critical periods of development, including periods during which social adversity shapes adult function; Affiliative behaviors such as friendship, attachment, pair-bonding, and empathy; and The formation and dynamics of social hierarchies.

To apply see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-DA-14-002.html.

2013 NIMHD Translational Health Disparities Course: August 5-6, 2013

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) recently announced its intention to once again host a course, *Integrating Principles of Science, Practice and Policy in Health Disparities Research*, this summer. The two-week intensive course will take place on the campus of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from August 5, 2013 to August 16, 2013.

The course will provide specialized instruction on the concepts, principles, methods, and applications of health disparities science, practice, and policy. It will also integrate principles and practice of community engagement. Nationally and internationally recognized experts in health disparities science will lead individual sessions.

While the course is free, admission is competitive and daily attendance is mandatory. Participants are responsible for their transportation, room and board. On- line applications only may be submitted via the Institute's website at www.nimhd.nih.gov from March 15 to May 15, 2013.

Planning Grants for the New NIH BUILD and NRMN Initiatives

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recognizes a unique and compelling need to promote diversity in the NIH-funded biomedical, behavioral, clinical and social science workforce. Accordingly, the agency expects efforts to diversify the workforce to lead to the recruitment of the most talented researchers from all groups, improve the quality of the educational and training environment, balance and broaden the perspective in setting research priorities, improve the ability to recruit subjects from diverse backgrounds into clinical research protocols, and improve the Nation's capacity to address and eliminate health disparities.

Responding to the recommendations of NIH Advisory Committee to the Director Working Group on Diversity in the Biomedical Research Workforce, the agency is establishing the "Enhancing Diversity in the NIH-Funded Workforce Program." The program is designed to unify and strengthen institutions and faculty that are dedicated to the recruitment and retention of diverse scientists.

The Enhancing Diversity in the NIH-Funded Workforce Program will consist of a series of coordinated initiatives: the Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) initiative, the National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN), and a Coordination and Evaluation Center.

Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD)

The agency has issued a funding opportunity announcement (RFA-RM-13-001) for six-month planning grants designed to enable institutions to form partnerships and enhance infrastructure to place them in a better position to apply for awards for the BUILD initiative. BUILD will support training for undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds underrepresented in biomedical and behavioral research and promote faculty development at comparatively under-resourced institutions with a track record of producing and supporting scientists from diverse backgrounds.

The initiative is expected to include five integrated components:

1. Tuition scholarships, including stipends, for up to two years of undergraduate studies for students with an interest in research, and once accepted to a Ph.D. program of their choice, the possibility for additional loan repayment funds to enable these students, to be known as BUILD scholars, to pay off any additional educational-related debt.
2. Rigorous mentored research experience BUILD scholars, and potentially additional undergraduate students, during two summers while in college and up to two years post-baccalaureate at participating institutions.
3. Salary offset and other infrastructure support for key faculty responsible for research training.
4. Resources for highly effective mentors to train new mentors.
5. Support for an "innovation space" environment for BUILD awardee institutions to develop additional creative and novel approaches to increase the diversity of the student pool that enters the Ph.D. training pathway relevant to biomedical research.

The planned competition for multi-year BUILD awards in FY 2014 will be open to all eligible applicants and will not be limited to recipients of BUILD planning grants. Therefore, organizations that consider themselves ready to submit an application without the need for a planning grant are not required to apply for this award but are encouraged to submit a letter of intent for the multi-year BUILD announcement when published.

Letters of intent are due April 10, 2013. Applications are due May 10, 2103. For more information and/or to apply see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-13-001.html.

NIH National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN)

The National Research Mentoring Network is intended to augment local mentoring efforts for undergraduate students through junior faculty members by creating a single, nationwide consortium of scientific leaders across a range of biomedical and behavioral/social science disciplines who are willing to serve as external mentors. The agency plans to provide a single, multi-year award for the NRMN to begin in 2014. The funding opportunity announcement is expected to be issued in the fall of 2013.

The five goals for the NRMN are:

1. Connecting students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty from groups underrepresented in the biomedical or behavioral research workforce with experienced mentors, both in person and through online networks.
2. Developing standards and metrics for effective face-to-face and online mentoring.
3. Providing training to individuals interested in learning how to become better mentors.
4. Providing or facilitating participation in relevant workshops and training opportunities in granstmanship and biomedical research career "survival" strategies.
5. Creating effective networking opportunities for students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior faculty from diverse backgrounds with the larger biomedical research community.

The NRMN is intended to collaborate with institutions in the NIH BUILD program. Both NRMN and BUILD will work with a Coordination and Evaluation Center to ensure appropriate coordination between the two programs, as well as other NIH diversity programs.

A funding opportunity announcement (RFA-RM-13-002) has also been issued for a six-month planning grants to support the preparation of an application to the program. A one-time award, the grant will not support direct mentoring activities. The competition for the NRMN award will be open to all eligible applicants and will not be limited to recipients of NRMN planning grants. Accordingly, organizations that consider themselves ready to submit an application without the need for a planning grant are not required to apply to the announcement but are encouraged to submit a letter of intent.

For more information and/or to apply see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-13-002.html.

NIH Director's Biomedical Research Workforce Innovation Award: Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training (BEST)

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has issued a funding opportunity announcement (FOA) (RFA-RM-12-022) to seek, identify, and support bold and innovative approaches to broaden postdoctoral training. The FOA is in response to recommendations provided by the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD), NIH (see Update, June 25, 2012). The ACD recommended that NIH-supported graduate programs and post-doctoral training be broadened to reflect the actual career outcomes of today's Ph.D. graduates and postdoctoral scientists.

The awards, known as BEST (Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training), are designed to provide support for institutions to develop novel ideas in training and workforce development. The goal of the program is to better prepare pre-doctoral students and postdoctoral scientists for the breadth of careers in the biomedical research workforce and to establish a network to develop, share, evaluate, and disseminate best practices within the training community.

Invited are bold and innovative applications that leverage existing institutional resources to broaden and enrich training experiences so that trainees are exposed to multiple research and research-related career paths early in those pathways. The announcement seeks applications from institutions with established pre-doctoral programs. The program is not meant to train participants fully for new career options, but should prepare them for the next steps in their career development. While it is expected that trainees intending to enter academic research careers will benefit from the broader training experience, programs designed exclusively to target academic research careers will be considered non-responsive. For individuals seeking careers in research-related areas, such as science policy, technology transfer, management or other areas requiring the research doctorate in biomedical science, NIH seeks applications to provide trainees meaningful training experiences so that they are better prepared to enter those occupations as well as for research careers in the private sector.

More broadly, the agency seeks innovative new business and academic models of how graduate programs in biomedical research sciences define themselves and their purpose, how they recruit, admit, support, steer and mentor students to prepare them appropriately for chosen biomedical research or research-related careers. It is expected that the BEST awards will transcend department, program, and possibly school boundaries, and be available to biomedical science students and postdocs across all disciplines. The programs should aim to transform the culture of research training in the biomedical sciences for both trainees and mentors and disseminate findings widely across the training community. Because the awards are meant to be experiments, rigorous evaluation of each individual award will be required by both the individual awardees and independently by NIH. In order to prevent undue redundancies and to share information and best practices, the BEST awardees will interact on a regular basis.

Letters of intent are due April 10, 2013. Applications are due May 10, 2013. For more information and/or to apply see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-12-022.html.

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