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Senate Moves Swiftly on Appropriations: Marks Up Six Bills

The Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired by Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), moved six FY 2011 spending bills to the Senate floor between July 15 and July 22. It plans on marking up two more the week of July 26. The House has considered only two bills at the full Appropriations Committee, although nine bills have emerged from the Subcommittees.

Before embarking on this burst of activity the Senate appropriators, like the House deemed, their overall spending level. With pressure from the Republican members of the Committee, Chairman Inouye brought the overall spending figure in at \$1.114 trillion, \$14 billion below the President's request, and \$7 billion below the House number. This constrained the Subcommittees somewhat. For example, the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), had to find \$400 million in savings from the request for the programs and agencies under its jurisdiction.

NSF Gets Seven Percent Increase from Senate Panel

The CJS Subcommittee reduced the FY 2011 funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) below the President's request. The panel allocated \$7.353 billion. The President requested and the House Subcommittee provided \$7.424 billion (see Update [July 12, 2010](#)). The panel's figure is still \$480.9 million or seven percent above the FY 2010 level.

The Research and Related Activities account, which includes funding for the research directorates, such as the one for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences, received \$5.967 billion from the Senate, slightly more than the House Subcommittee's mark of \$5.961 billion. These are both reductions from the requested \$6.018 billion. The Senate number is \$403.3 million above the FY 2010 appropriation.

The Committee provided \$892 million for the Education and Human Resources directorate; same as the request, almost \$20 million above FY 2010, but \$62 million below the House. The Committee, in report language, rejected the NSF's plan to consolidate the directorate's three broadening participation programs in its Human and Resource Development division. The report also included instructions to NSF to spend \$2 million "for a competitive program of grants to promote STEM education through robotics competitions." In addition, it encouraged NSF to include funding for the Professional Science Master's Degree program in its FY 2012 budget submission.

NIJ Increased; BJS Down Slightly

The Senate panel recommended \$60 million for both the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). This is a \$12 million increase over FY 2010 for NIJ, but a \$10 million decrease from the request. For BJS the Committee's allocation represents a \$2.5 million decrease from the FY 2010 appropriation and the FY 2011 request. Of the BJS's \$60 million, the Committee expects the agency to allocate \$41 million for the redesign and execution of the National Crime Victimization Survey.

The Committee accepted the request of Assistant Attorney General Laurie Robinson that will permit "up to 3 percent of grant and reimbursement program funds [of the Office of Justice Programs] ...to be transferred to the National Institute of Justice or the Bureau of Justice Statistics for criminal justice research and statistics." NIJ will also receive \$3 million in funds from the appropriation to the Office of Violence Against Women and \$5 million from the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants.

There is no mention in the Committee report of the National Academies' recently released document, *Strengthening the National Institute of Justice* (see Update, [July 12, 2010](#)). The Appropriations panel's report instead states: "The Committee expects NIJ to carry out the new initiatives proposed in fiscal year 2011 to the extent possible with the funds provided, which includes the Disproportionate Minority Contact and Evaluation Program, Stopping Crime Block-by-Block Field Experiments, the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program [ADAM], Inmate Reentry Evaluation, and the Evaluation Capacity Initiative, among others. The Committee directs that prior to the obligation of any funds, NIJ submit a spending plan on how resources will be allocated." The Committee also accepts the proposal for NIJ to spend \$1 million on the Evaluation Clearinghouse/What Works Repository, an online source for evidence-based information on criminal justice and juvenile justice policy and practice.

Census, BEA Reduced from the Request

The Appropriations Committee recommended \$1.245 billion for the Bureau of the Census. This is \$22.3 million below the President's request. Comparisons to the FY 2010 figures are not sensible, since this was the year the decennial count was conducted and the Bureau's budget peaked at \$7.325 billion. The appropriation from the House CJS Subcommittee was \$1.237 billion.

The panel provided \$280.4 million for the Salaries and Expenses account, matching the \$21.3 million boost from the FY 2010 level in the President's request. For the Periodic Censuses and Programs including the American Community Survey (ACS), the panel's recommendation is reduced. The report language complains about the level of spending for the 2010 count suggesting that "decennial census

operations have become unwieldy." It makes a strong statement that: "Looking forward, the Bureau has a fresh opportunity to prove that Government can work smarter and save the taxpayers money, by streamlining operations, eliminating wasteful processes, providing sounder financial oversight, and taking better advantage of technology, especially in information gathering and data management."

The report says nothing about the proposed increase of the ACS' sample size, for which the Bureau requested \$44 million in FY 2011. It appears the Bureau will have to make some tradeoff if that is to be achieved.

The Economic and Statistics Administration, which includes the Bureau of Economic Analysis, received \$110 million; \$12.7 million above FY 2010, but \$3.2 million below the request.

Agriculture and Rural Development

The Senate Agriculture and Rural Development Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI), had its recommendations reported out by the full Appropriations Committee on July 15.

The National Institute on Food and Agriculture research and education funding is allocated \$780.7 million. Hatch Act funding is at \$215 million, same as last year and the request. Over \$49 million will go to Special Research Grants or congressionally-directed funding. The Agricultural Food and Research Initiative received \$310.1 million, up from last year's \$262.5 million, but significantly below the \$428.8 million in the request. The Committee recommends \$755,000 for the Rural Policies Research Institute.

The Committee provided \$83.7 million for the Economic Research Service (ERS). This is \$1.2 million above FY 2010, but \$4.7 million below the request. The Committee recommendation includes increases of: \$1.5 million to improve user access to statistical data provided by ERS; \$1 million for economic research on the access to affordable and nutritious food by low-income communities; and \$990,000 for data integrity measures. It also assumes all savings proposed in the budget request. The appropriation also includes \$500,000 for continuation of the Organic Production and Market Data Initiative.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) received funding of \$163.7 million, almost \$2 million above FY 2010, but \$1 million below the request. According to the report, this funding includes increases of: \$4 million to enhance the annual county estimates program; \$500,000 to begin a comprehensive data series on organic production, handling and distribution; and \$800,000 to enhance remote sensing activities. Also included in this amount is \$33.5 million for the Census of Agriculture.

University Programs Gets Boost in DHS Recommendations

The Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, now chaired by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) replacing the late Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV), had its allocations emerge from the full Senate committee on July 15. The Committee provided the Science and Technology Directorate a total of \$863.4 million for its research, development, acquisition and operations. The Human Factors division received \$13.4 million, same as the request, and a \$2.6 million decrease from FY 2010. The University programs activity received \$50 million, a \$10 million increase over the FY 2011 request and a slight increase from FY 2010.

With regard to the Human Factors division, the Committee report notes "the efforts to validate the Transportation Security Administration's behavior detection program called Screening Passengers by Observation Techniques. As recommended by the Government Accountability Office, the results of this study are to be peer reviewed as an important quality control mechanism. S&T is to brief the Committee no later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this act on its plans to comply with this requirement."

The Senate Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), expects to mark up its bill on July 27, with full committee action on July 29. The House

Subcommittee chaired by Rep. David Obey marked up its bill on July 15. The panel provided the National Institutes of Health with \$32 billion; a \$1 billion increase from FY 2010 and the same as the request.

The House has scheduled two full appropriations committee markups during the week of July 26, Agriculture and Homeland Security. It will take the Military Construction/Veterans' Affairs and Transportation/HUD spending bills to the floor, before it leaves for a six week summer recess returning on September 13. The Senate expects to stay in session through at least August 6 during which time the debate over Elena Kagan's nomination to the Supreme Court could occur.

Science Subcommittee Explores 'Economics for the Real World'

With the nation's economic distress continuing and Congress enacting a financial services reform package (see other story), the House Science and Technology Committee's Investigation and Oversight Panel held a hearing seeking to ascertain whether a certain model of macroeconomics was to blame for the big economic mess.

Building on an earlier Subcommittee hearing that blamed economic models for the global financial meltdown (see Update, [September 15, 2009](#)), the panel chairman Rep. Brad Miller (D-NC) once again cited Harry Truman's search for the one-handed economist and again set up the Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE) macroeconomics model, as the fall guy for the crisis. Because this was a Science and Technology Committee hearing, and as the panel suggested economics is "a field which aspires to be a science," for which the National Science Foundation (NSF) is the major funding source, Miller wanted to know: "What are we getting out of the economic research funded" at NSF?

Economics Nobel Prize winner and MIT Professor Emeritus Robert Solow provided the Subcommittee his opinion of DSGE, which was that it doesn't "pass the smell test." He accused the DSGE modelers of taking for granted "that the whole economy can be thought about as if it were a single, consistent person or dynasty carrying out a rationally designed, long-term plan." He further suggested that most people do not behave in this rational way. The economy is too complex, and unlike the assumptions in the DSGE model, "a national economy...is pretty conspicuously not pursuing a consistent goal," he testified.

The DSGE model, Solow asserted, "has no real room for the unemployment of the kind we see most of the time, and especially now: unemployment that is pure waste." He further suggested that DSGE modelers see unemployment as "voluntary." This is something that also "does not pass the smell test." He concluded his testimony by declaring that the DSGE model "has nothing useful to say about anti-recession policy because it has built into its essentially implausible assumptions the 'conclusion' that there is nothing for macroeconomic policy to do." He told the Subcommittee that he viewed the ideas of the late James Tobin as a key macroeconomist worth looking at again.

Sidney Winter, a member of the COSSA Board of Directors and Professor Emeritus of Management at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, made the argument that "almost all model-building and theorizing in [economics], both macroeconomic and microeconomic" are "oblivious to behavioral realities at the levels of the fundamental units of the complex system they study." He noted that his switch from an economic department to a management department allowed him to pursue his research on the realities of business behavior and organizational behavior generally. He criticized the DSGE model as "an extreme case of the tendency to analyze hyper-stylized versions of economic problems, thereby suppressing or denying quite observable realities." He blamed the economic crisis on the "insidious evolution of the U.S. mortgage market."

Scott Page, Professor of Complex Systems at the University of Michigan and an external faculty member of the Santa Fe Institute, made the case for diverse multiple models of a complex system like the U.S. economy. He too criticized the neoclassical model since "it assumes no sectors of the economy, no physical geography, no networks of connections, no learning, and little or no

heterogeneity of income, wealth, or behaviors."

Yet the real economy, Page asserted, consists of over three hundred million people, nearly thirty million organizations and tens of thousand of government agencies with actors who possess diverse beliefs and goals. They adapt as circumstance change - some spend, some save, and some innovate. It is the aggregated interdependent actions of these millions of actors that produce the macroeconomic patterns that economists seek to explain and predict, he explained. To do this, Page argued for the adoption of complex systems models using computational or what are called 'agent based' techniques, which are capable of including sector level details - financial markets, real estate markets, and service markets.

David Colander of Middlebury College introduced himself as the "Economics Court Jester." He was making a repeat appearance before the Subcommittee after his testimony at the earlier session. His testimony reiterated the ideas he promoted at the earlier hearing. He also denigrated the DSGE model. He also blamed graduate training in economics for teaching future economists how to develop models, but not how to use them with judgment to arrive at policy conclusions. He would "increase the number of researchers trained in interpreting models rather than developing them." This could occur, he testified, by having NSF provide research grants for this work through an applied science division.

Colander offered a number of possible solutions that "might help add a common sense check on models" and improve the response to future crises. One suggestion he proffered "would be to include a wider range of peers in the reviewing process of NSF grants in the social sciences." For example, Colander would like physicists, mathematicians, statisticians, and even business and governmental representatives, to serve, along with economists, on reviewing committees for economics' proposals.

Chari Defends Macroeconomics

It was left to Professor V.V. Chari of the University of Minnesota to defend macroeconomics and the DSGE model. He argued that modern macroeconomic models make sure: they are consistent with the National Income and Product Accounts; they lay out clearly how people make decisions; they are explicit about the constraints imposed by nature, the structure of market and available information on choices to households, firms and the government. He claimed that telling a macroeconomic story needs a DSGE model; otherwise it is "incoherent."

He told the Subcommittee that DSGE models have changed in recent years leading to heterogeneity in behavior and decisions. He asserted that "any claim that modern macro is dominated by representative agent models in wrong." He also noted that the models now also focus on the dynamics of unemployment. He cited the work of current Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, a macroeconomist who studied the Great Depression and who was at the center of the field, who incorporated financial frictions into the DSGE models. This is also true for recent work in international macroeconomics.

The improvements, Chari noted, have made it possible "to understand macroeconomic forces much better" and have enhanced the conduct of monetary policy. Yet, he admitted that the DSGE models failed to predict the recent financial crisis. The reasons for this Chari indicated were three. First, the historical perspective was not long enough and only took into account the relative prosperity of the last sixty years in the U.S. and did not examine economic systems, such as Argentina, where financial crises have occurred more frequently.

The second reason is that "we deemphasized the insights of the literature on the perverse effects of government bailouts." The third reason is that "we have devoted far too little by way of resources to modern macroeconomics." The NSF economics budget, he reminded the panel, is \$27 million out of which only ten percent goes to macroeconomics. Thus, in a basic research budget of roughly \$30 billion, Chari declared, this is a pittance to a subject which the Subcommittee claims has a significant impact on the nation's economic decision-making.

Chari also defended the NSF peer review process, particularly in economics, calling it "exceptionally fair and thoughtful." He rejected Colander's call for adding non-economists to the panel, as did Solow. Although both he and Winter indicated they could see review panelists who serve in the government economic agencies such as the Council of Economic Advisers or the Congressional Budget Office. Chari also rejected the Subcommittee's blame strategy, suggesting that biologists' failure to predict the AIDS crisis, "did not turn over medical research to acupuncturists."

Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, told the panelists that he understood the limitations of models and the complexity of economics. "They are not crystal balls," he announced, and that decisions, such as those made during the economic crisis, also depend on human factors in interpreting the models. He claimed that "science describes," it does not prescribe.

Financial Reform Bill Establishes Office of Financial Research

On July 21, President Obama signed the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. The new law establishes a Financial Stability Oversight Council to monitor potential threats to the financial system and provide more stringent regulation on financial companies and their activities that the Council determines, pose risks to financial stability. To support the Council, the law also establishes an Office of Financial Research (OFR) in the Department of Treasury.

A Director, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, to serve a six year term, will lead the OFR. The Director will report to and testify before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs and the House Financial Services Committee annually about the activities of the Office. For that testimony "no officer or agency of the U.S. shall have any authority to require the Director to submit the testimony ...or other congressional testimony for approval comment, or review prior to the submission of such testimony."

The purpose of the Office is to support the Council, by:

- (1) collecting data on behalf of the Council, and providing such data to the Council and member agencies;
- (2) standardizing the types and formats of data reported and collected;
- (3) performing applied research and essential long-term research;
- (4) developing tools for risk measurement and monitoring;
- (5) performing other related services;
- (6) making the results of the activities of the Office available to financial regulatory agencies; and
- (7) assisting such member agencies in determining the types and formats of data authorized by this Act to be collected by such member agencies.

The OFR will have two programmatic offices: a Data Center and a Research and Analysis Center. The Data Center will collect, validate, and maintain all data necessary to carry out its duties, including financial transaction data and position data from financial companies. The data "shall be obtained from member agencies, commercial data providers, publicly available data sources, and financial entities" or "through requiring the submission of periodic and other reports from any financial company for the purpose of assessing the extent to which a financial activity or financial market in which the financial company participates, or the financial company itself, poses a threat to the financial stability of the United States."

The Data Center shall prepare and publish, in publicly accessible manner (1) a financial company reference database; (2) a financial instrument reference database; and (3) formats and standards for Office data, including standards for reporting financial transaction and position data to the Office.

The Research and Analysis Center, on behalf of the Council, shall develop and maintain independent analytical capabilities and computing resources to:

- (A) develop and maintain metrics and reporting systems for risks to the financial stability of the United States;
- (B) monitor, investigate, and report on changes in systemwide risk levels and patterns to the Council and Congress;
- (C) conduct, coordinate, and sponsor research to support and improve regulation of financial entities and markets;
- (D) evaluate and report on stress tests or other stability-related evaluations of financial entities overseen by the member agencies;
- (E) maintain expertise in such areas as may be necessary to support specific requests for advice and assistance from financial regulators;
- (F) investigate disruptions and failures in the financial markets, report findings, and make recommendations to the Council based on those findings;
- (G) conduct studies and provide advice on the impact of policies related to systemic risk; and
- (H) promote best practices for financial risk management.

After two years of initial start-up funds, the Office will have permanent self-funding. This will get accomplished by the establishment, by the Secretary of the Treasury through regulation, and with the approval of the Council, "an assessment schedule, including the assessment base and rates, applicable to bank holding companies with total consolidated assets of \$50 billion or greater and nonbank financial companies supervised by the Board of Governors, that takes into account differences among such companies...to collect assessments equal to the total expenses of the Office."

The Office may share data and information, including software developed by the Office, with the Council, member agencies, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, provided the data, information, and software may not be shared with any individual or entity without the permission of the Council. OFR can also sponsor and conduct research projects and assist, on a reimbursable basis, with financial analyses undertaken at the request of other Federal agencies that are not member agencies.

The Office may also establish and maintain an academic and professional fellowship program, under which qualified academics and professionals shall be invited to spend not longer than two years at OFR to perform research and to provide advanced training.

National Academies' Board on Science Education Issues "A Framework for Science Education:" Science Does Not Include the Social and Behavioral Sciences

Trying to keep up with the Chief State School Officers and the National Governors' Association, who are busy reforming the K-12 education system in reading and mathematics with voluntary national core standards (see Update, [May 3, 2010](#)), the National Academies' Board on Science Education has jumped into the fray. On July 12, it issued "A Framework for Science Education" in preliminary public draft form and **asked for public comment by August 2, 2010.**

The framework, developed by the Committee on Conceptual Framework for New Science Education Standards, chaired by Helen R. Quinn of the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory at Stanford University, is the panel's "vision of the scope and nature of the education in science and engineering in the 21st Century." Although it emphasizes the "integration of both and knowledge and scientific explanation and the practices needed to engage in scientific inquiry and engineering design," in this case, 'science' does not include the social and behavioral sciences.

The Committee report cites prior work in this area, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science's (AAAS) *Benchmarks for Scientific Literacy*, which included the social and

behavioral sciences. It also cites vast amounts of research on early childhood development, how children learn, and how to improve teaching and learning, much of it conducted by social and behavioral scientists.

Although the Committee narrowed its focus to examine student needs in learning the Life Sciences, Earth and Space Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Engineering and Technology, the report is chock full of ideas, concepts, and questions that would suggest an understanding of the social and behavioral sciences would give students a better understanding of science.

Some examples from the report: "social world;" "connecting with students' own experiences;" "enlisting and embracing diversity;" "real world problems;" historical, social, cultural, and ethical aspects of science, engineering and technology;" "the country's current and emerging social, technological, and environmental issues;" "Human Interactions with Earth;" "Technology both affects and is affected by decisions people make;" Solving technological problems involves "time, resource, economic, environmental, social, and ethical considerations;" "Finding the best solution often requires making decisions regarding tradeoffs among competing criteria;" "How have developments and uses of technologies brought about changes in the natural environment and human culture;" and "how change occurs in nature and in social and technological systems"

Finally, the report admits that: "Science, engineering, and technology do not exist in isolation from society: they are a part of, contribute to, and are influenced by the society and culture in which they take place. Consideration of the historical, social, cultural, and ethical aspects of science and technology needs to be linked to other social science studies and raised in the science classroom."

To view the draft report and the instructions for providing feedback go to: http://www7.nationalacademies.org/bose/Standards_Framework_Homepage.html.

Guttmacher Appointed to Lead NICHD



Alan Guttmacher, currently the Acting Director for the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, has been appointed by National Institutes of Health (NIH) director Francis Collins to lead the Institute.

Guttmacher began his NIH career at the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) as a special assistant to the director. He became deputy director in 2002 and acting director in 2008. Guttmacher came to the NIH from the University of Vermont, where he directed the Department of Pediatrics' Vermont Regional Genetics Center and Pregnancy Risk Information Service. He served as the medical director of the Vermont Newborn Screening Program, founded Vermont's only pediatric intensive care unit, and co-directed the Vermont Cancer Center's Familial Cancer Program. He also was the principal investigator for an NIH-supported initiative that was the nation's first statewide effort to involve the general public in discussion of the Human Genome Project's ethical, legal, and social implications.

Guttmacher is a graduate of Harvard College. He attributes his interest in medicine to his early career as a middle school teacher, when he developed an interest in the origins and treatment of pediatric learning disorders. After graduation from Harvard Medical School, he served as a physician in several developmental pediatrics programs at Children's Hospital in Boston, where he then completed an internship and residency in pediatrics and a fellowship in medical genetics. He is a member of the Institute of Medicine.

As NICHD acting director, Guttmacher began the process of developing a scientific vision for the institute (See Update, [June 14, 2010](#)). Over the next year, NICHD staff intends to work with multiple external communities that have an interest in the institute's mission, to identify promising new

scientific opportunities in the decade ahead. "Our objective is to develop a scientific vision that sets a realistic but ambitious agenda and inspires the institute, the research community and the NICHD's partners to achieve critical scientific goals and meet pressing public health needs," Guttmacher noted.

"As a pediatrician, geneticist, and highly regarded leader at NIH over the last decade, Alan has the experience and the vision to lead the NICHD during what promises to be the most exciting time for science as well as for women's and children's health," noted Collins in making the announcement.

Jack Buckley to Return to NCES as Commissioner



On July 9, President Obama announced his intention to nominate Jack Buckley as Commissioner of Education Statistics and head of the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). His nomination was formally submitted to the Senate three days later. The Senate needs to confirm him. Buckley replaces Mark Schneider, who left in October 2008. Stuart Kerachsky has been Acting Commissioner since then.

NCES is part of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and produces *The Condition of Education*, the *Nation's Report Card* and other publications. It also supports data collections such as the Early Longitudinal Childhood Longitudinal Survey, High School and Beyond, the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Survey, and the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. Although part of IES, the NCES Commissioner has a six-year term.

Buckley is currently an Associate Professor of Applied Statistics at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development at New York University. He has also taught statistics and education policy as an adjunct assistant professor at Georgetown University, as an assistant professor at Boston College, and as an instructor in Political Science at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook. Additionally, he is an affiliated researcher with the National Center for the Study of Privatization of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He is the co-author (with Mark Schneider) of *Charter Schools: Hope or Hype?*

Buckley has a B.A from Harvard and a M.A. and Ph.D. in political science with an emphasis on public policy and statistical methodology from SUNY at Stony Brook. His adviser there was Mark Schneider.

HHS Seeks Input on Development of an Inventory of Comparative Effectiveness Research Database

The Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning Evaluation (ASPE) is developing a national inventory of comparative effectiveness research (CER) and CER-related information. Accordingly, ASPE has issued a request for public information (RFI) to assist in the creation of a searchable online database that will provide feedback on the comparative effectiveness of different diagnostic, therapeutic and medical procedures. **Comments are due by August 9, 2010.**

According to the RFI, the new database will provide up-to-date information regarding which therapies and interventions are most effective. Development of the database, supported by funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), aims to assist researchers, medical providers, patients, consumers and decision makers to identify relevant CER in a timely, user-friendly manner. ARRA provided \$1.1 billion for research and development in the area of CER.

Submitted comments could helpfully suggest which sources of medical literature should be used, how best to attract the contribution of studies, how to best categorize content, which features might prove most useful, and how to ensure sustainability of the inventory over time. Comments should not include

the methodology for doing CER or suggestions for inclusion of specific CER studies. ASPE is seeking public comment on the following issues:

1. Sources for CER. The CER Inventory will draw electronically on existing sites (e.g., PubMed, HSRProj, and Clinicaltrials.gov) and will also permit direct entry of information. Identify any sources of information, such as relevant sources of gray literature or research databases from private foundations, that would help meet the goals of the CER Inventory.
2. Encouraging participation/submission. What incentives would encourage the contribution of CER research abstracts and other relevant documents into the CER Inventory?
3. Categorization. CER projects and resources should be categorized in a manner that ensures that individuals from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of technical expertise (e.g., researchers, policy makers, clinicians, and patients and consumers) can access relevant information. How might such a categorization scheme and approach be designed? Comment on the rationale behind suggested categorization schemes.
4. Data elements. Are there specific types of data or information regarding records or descriptions of CER entered into the CER Inventory that should be captured and available to users? Identify key data and information, if any.
5. Features. Are there features of a web-based CER Inventory that would promote long-term use among the intended audiences?
6. Sustainability. What approaches or business models would provide for a sustainable inventory over time?
7. Additional considerations. Are there potential drawbacks, unintended consequences, or other specific issues that may limit participation in the CER Inventory?

For more information, contact Kate Goodrich, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, (202) 690-7213. The full text of the RFI (Docket ID: HHS-OS-2010-0017) and the mechanism to [submit comments](#) is available at www.Regulations.gov. Additional information is also available through the [HHS website](#).

2010 Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics Report Available

According to the report, *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well Being, 2010*, released on July 9, in 2009, there were 74.5 million children in the United States, an increase of 2 million since 2000. This number is projected to increase to 101.6 million by 2050. Since the mid-1960s, the report notes, children have been decreasing as a proportion of the total U.S. population, making up 24 percent of the population in 2009. This is down from a peak of 36 percent at the end of the "baby boom" in 1964.

The report is the annual federal statistics compilation by Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, and is the result of a working group of 22 federal agencies that collect, analyze, and report data on issues related to children and families. The Forum fosters coordination and integration among the agencies. Since 1997, the Forum has published a report of the well-being of children. Forty indicators are tracked and pending data availability are updated annually on its website. In alternate years, a detailed report is published with a summary version that highlights selected indicators.

The 2010 report also notes that the racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. population has grown. The nation will become even more diverse in the decades to come. In 2023, less than half of all children are projected to be White, non-Hispanic. By 2050, 39 percent of U.S. children are projected to be Hispanic (up from 22 percent in 2009) and 28 percent are projected to be White, non-Hispanic (down

from 55 percent in 2009).

The statistically significant changes found in the period of 2007-2008 cited in the 2010 report include:

- An increase in health insurance coverage rates (89 percent to 90 percent) for children from birth to 17 years of age
- A decrease from 12.7 to 12.3 percent in the proportion of infants born before 37 weeks
- A decrease from 22.2 per 1,000 girls ages 14-17 to 21.7 per 1,000 births by adolescents
- An increase (from 18 percent to 19 percent) in the proportion of related children from birth to 17 years of age living in poverty
- A decrease in the percentage (77 percent to 75 percent) of children from birth to 17 years of age living with at least one parent employed year round full time

Child Well-Being Indicators

The indicators cited in the report are based on substantial research connecting them to child well-being, cut across important areas of children's lives, are measured regularly so that they can be updated and show trends over time, and represent large segments of the population. The child well-being indicators span seven domains: *Family and Social Environment, Economic Circumstances, Health Care, Physical Environment and Safety, Behavior, Education, and Health.*

The *Family and Social Environment* section provides information on children's families and the social environment in which they live. The indicators cited examine nativity, home language, child maltreatment, and adolescent births.

Measures of poverty, secure parental employment, and food security are provided in the *Economic Circumstances* section. The report notes that nearly one in five children lived in poverty in 2008, the highest rate since 1998. Eight percent of related children (5.9 million) lived in extreme poverty, defined as living in a family with income less than one-half of the poverty threshold, the highest percentage since 1998.

The *Health Care* section of the report includes the prevention, treatment, and management of illness and the promotion of mental and physical well-being through services offered by health professionals. Indicators include measures of access to health care (health insurance and usual source of care) and health care utilization indicators of oral health and childhood immunizations. The report cites dental caries as the single most common chronic disease of childhood.

The *Physical Environment and Safety* section contains indicators of environmental safety (exposure to indoor air pollutants, drinking water contaminants, and lead) and indicators of the physical environment (housing problems and violent crime victimization). In 2007, 43 percent of U.S. households with children had physically inadequate housing, crowded housing, and/or a housing cost burden of more than 30 percent of household income.

The *Behavior* indicators in the report track high-risk or illegal behaviors including substance use behaviors, early sexual activity and participation in violent crime. According to these indicators, the percentage of adolescents who smoke regularly has reached its lowest level since monitoring began. In addition, between 1999 and 2009, heavy drinking declined from 13 percent to 8 percent among 8th graders, from 24 percent to 18 percent among 10th graders, and from 31 percent to 25 percent among 12th graders.

The *Education* indicators include the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which measures national trends in student performance in mathematics, reading, and other academic subjects. According to the report, the average 4th-grade NAEP mathematics score in 2009 was higher than the score in 1990, but unchanged from the score in 2007. The average 8th-grade mathematics score in 2009 was higher than the score in all previous assessment years and two points higher than the score in 2007.

The *Health* section presents information about indicators related to birth outcomes and key physical and mental health conditions that may result from a combination of these influences.

The agencies that make up the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics include: the Departments of **Agriculture** (Economic Research Service), **Commerce** (U.S. Census Bureau), **Education** (National Center for Education Statistics), **Health and Human Services** (Administration on Children and Families, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, National Center for Health Statistics, National Institute of Mental Health, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), **Housing and Urban Development** (Office of Policy Development and Research), **Justice** (Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention), **Labor** (Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Women's Bureau), **Transportation** (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration), the **Environmental Protection Agency** (Office of Children's Health Protection) the **National Science Foundation** (Division of Science Resources Statistics) and the **Office of Management and Budget** (Statistical and Science Policy Office).

Single copies of the report are available through the Health Resources and Services Administration Information Center while supplies last: P.O. Box 2910, Merrifield, VA 22116; Toll-Free Lines 1-888-Ask-HRSA or TTY: 1-877-4TY-HRSA; Fax 703-821-2098 or via E-mail: ask@hrsa.org. It is also available on the web at <http://childstats.gov>.

Impact of Recession on American Families Discussed at Congressional Briefing

On July 12, the Population Association of America (PAA), with co-sponsorship from COSSA, presented a session on Capitol Hill, *Recession and Recovery: How Are Americans Affected?*

Speaking at the event were: Michael Hurd, Director of the Center for the Study of Aging at the RAND Corporation; Kathleen Mullan Harris, Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and Greg Duncan, Distinguished Professor in the Education Department at the University of California, Irvine. Matt Stagner of the University of Chicago moderated.

Following the sequence of the "Curious Case of Benjamin Button," Hurd began by discussing the effects of the recession on the elderly and near-elderly. Using data from the RAND American Life Panel Study and the Health and Retirement Study, Hurd indicated that the recession has created financial distress for about 15 percent of this segment of the population. This stress occurs from falling behind on mortgage payments, negative home equity, foreclosure, or unemployment of the responder or his/her spouse. However, Hurd also noted that the impact has varied in the population aged 40 or older. It is younger households who are more affected, 19 percent in the 40-49 group compared to only 3 percent in the over 70 cohort. Lower income people also have suffered more.

Americans, according to Hurd, have adjusted to the financial problems by reducing their spending. Again, however, there are age variations, with those under 50 more severely cutting back, while those in the over-50 category spending about the same as they were before. People have also become more pessimistic about the future and there are few indications of improved expectations for the economy. This has led to depression and retirement postponements.

Harris a former PAA President, focused on the impact of the economic downturn on young adults. Using data from the Adolescent Health (AddHealth) Survey, which she directs, Harris focused on the respondents, who are now 24-32 years old.

She discovered that the recession's unemployment and job loss has led to young adults to: move back home with their parents, postpone marriage, defer starting a family, and delay finishing college. The downturn has also created difficulties in getting or paying for medical care for these young adults.

According to the Survey, almost 20 percent of this population was unemployed in 2008, another 10 percent suggested their jobs were unstable, and almost 16 percent were living with their parents. As a result, about one-fifth to one-quarter of these folks lost their phone service and could not make their utility payments. Approximately 20 percent were in debt.

Over four-in-ten of those young adults facing job instability did not have health insurance or did not get health care when they needed it. About one-seventh of these folks were in poor physical health and about four to six percent were having mental health problems. These young adults mirrored their middle-aged counterparts in holding pessimistic views of the future, reflected in decisions to postpone or eliminate the idea of having children.

One mitigating factor to all this bad news, Harris discovered, is that moving back in with your parents protects young adults economically. However, it does not provide the same protection from the health and attitudinal effects of the recession, she concluded.

Duncan, a member of the COSSA Board and the current President of the Society for Research in Child Development, another co-sponsor of the event, focused on "The Long Reach of Early Childhood Poverty." He demonstrated that poverty in early childhood compromises a child's life chances.

Using research on early brain development, Duncan demonstrated that "brains and skills are built in a bottom-up sequence and shaped by the 'serve and return' nature of human interaction." These studies have shown that significant adversity negatively affects brain power, according to Duncan.

Duncan examined adult outcomes from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, an NSF-supported data set that has over forty years of information on 5,000 families that have been followed during that time period. The data demonstrate, Duncan indicated, that low income in childhood significantly affects earnings, work hours, and whether or not you receive food stamps. However, he noted, this only happens for children of low income families in from prenatal to age 5. There does not appear, Duncan related, any impact for those in low income families when they are age six to 15, with the exception of receiving food stamps.

With regard to policy implications, Duncan suggested that providing parents a \$3,000 annual increase in income for seven years between prenatal and the fifth year would yield higher adult earnings and more work hours for the child. Thus, he concluded, income transfer programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the child tax credit should be targeted on the prenatal to age five periods.

Can We Fight Poverty with Cash Incentives? New York City Experiments

On July 12, Brookings held a briefing, *Fighting Poverty with Cash Incentives: Can It Work?*, on New York City's (NYC) Family Rewards program. According to recently released findings from the MDRC, within the first two years of the three-year experiment that provides cash incentives to poor families, families in the program experienced a reduction in poverty, increased family savings, improved school attendance as well as other benefits.

NYC's conditional cash transfer (CCT) program was launched in six communities with the highest levels of poverty. There are 4,800 families involved in the three year program, 2,400 families receiving

benefits and 2,400 in the control group. The program is centered on three types of conditional rewards: education, healthcare and employment. CCT offered 22 incentives ranging in reward value from \$20 to \$600, with families earning an average of \$6,000 a year.

MDRC's report found that the CCT program helped reduce poverty among families, and as a consequence reduced the number of families suffering from food and housing insecurity. The findings also show that since the program paid recipients by check, it increased the likelihood that parents would have a bank checking or savings account, which reduced their reliance on check cashers. MDRC also noted that the program helped families reduce their reliance on the emergency room for routine care and produced substantial increases in preventive dental care.

With regard to school achievement, test performance among younger students showed no improvement. The program also did not improve the outcomes for elementary or middle school students, and had few effects overall on the outcomes of high school students. It did, however, raise the academic achievement levels of high school students who were better academically prepared for school.

The early findings on the program appear mixed when it comes to adult employment. While the likelihood of full-time employment and average earnings increased, the jobs were often the type not covered by the unemployment insurance system.

The third and final year of the program will end in August 2010. The families will continue to be followed to see if the initial findings are upheld and what if any additional benefits emerge. MDRC's final evaluation report is scheduled for completion in 2013.

To find out more information on NYC's Family Rewards program and the MDRC report please go to <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/549/full.pdf>

More Research on Eliminating Child Abuse Necessary

On July 20, The Center on Children and Families, a joint project between Princeton University and the Brookings Institution held an event on *Preventing Child Abuse in an Age of Budget Deficits*. The topic of child maltreatment was the focus of the *Future of Children* journal released last winter. (see Update, [October 8, 2009](#)).

Each year 800,000 children are abused or neglected and more than 1,500 will die as a result of abuse. The cost of child maltreatment goes beyond the physical, developmental and emotional trauma that children suffer. In 2002, the Urban Institute estimated that federal, state and local direct spending for child maltreatment was \$23 billion a year. Researchers Ching-Tung and John Holton of Prevent Child Abuse America estimated that the total direct cost of child maltreatment is closer to \$33 billion, when healthcare, mental health and law enforcement costs are factored in the equation, and put the indirect costs as high as \$70 billion.

"An aggressive research agenda to identify new and effective parenting programs is timely and could result in significant savings in parent and child misery and in public dollars," said Richard Barth, Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Preventative programs have been proven to save money by reducing the child abuse incidents and helping parents become better guardians of their children. David Olds' Nurse Family Partnership program seeks to prevent child maltreatment by helping first time low income women. The results of

the program have proven to help reduce children's injuries, increase employment and reduce reliance on welfare and food stamps. In 2004, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy Economic Analysis conducted a study on the *Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth* and found that the Nurse Family Partnership for the per child implementation costs of \$9,118 the benefits were \$26,298, resulting in a \$17,180 return on investment. While currently we are in the Great Recession investing funds in preventative parenting programs could help states save more money in this era of budget cuts.

For more information please go to the *Future of Children* website: http://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/journals/journal_details/index.xml?journalid=71.

NSF Solicits Proposals for Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering (REESE) program seeks to advance research at the frontiers of STEM learning, education, and evaluation, and to provide the foundational knowledge necessary to improve STEM teaching and learning at all educational levels and in all settings. **The proposal deadline is November 15, 2010.**

According to NSF, the goals of the program are: (1) to catalyze discovery and innovation at the frontiers of STEM learning, education, and evaluation; (2) to stimulate the field to produce high quality and robust research results through the progress of theory, method, and human resources; and (3) to coordinate and transform advances in education, learning research, and evaluation. REESE has a number of research strands for this solicitation. They include: National STEM education policies; implementation; STEM learning in formal and informal settings; cyberlearning and learning technologies; methods, models, and measures for research and evaluation; cognitive underpinnings of STEM learning; and the neural bases of STEM learning.

This solicitation calls for four types of proposals: *Pathways*, *Synthesis*, *Empirical Research*, and *Large Empirical Research*. The proposal type and its research strand(s) should be specified in the first sentence of the project summary. It is not necessary to include the proposal type or research strand in the project title. Pathways Projects are small-scale studies that include proof-of-concept and feasibility studies-work that is on a path toward a major project (i.e., Synthesis, Empirical, or Large Scale Empirical) but requires the establishment of empirical foundations before major projects can be deemed warranted and competitive in the review process. Pathways projects cannot exceed \$250,000 (total) and a duration of two years.

Synthesis proposals are small grants for the synthesis and/or meta-analysis of existing knowledge on a topic of critical importance to STEM learning, education, and/or evaluation, or for the diffusion of research-based knowledge. Maximum award size for Synthesis proposals is \$250,000 (total) for duration of up to two years.

Empirical Research proposals are designed to support the design and conduct of research and evaluation projects including the collection of new empirical data or the use of secondary analyses from existing state, national, international or other databases. Maximum award size for Empirical Research proposals is \$1,500,000 (total) for up to three years in duration. Large Empirical Research proposals are projects that seek up to \$2,500,000 (total) for up to five years. These proposals may involve teams of multi-disciplinary experts working on conceptually related problems, longitudinal studies of a large sample of participants, randomized controlled trials of an intervention whose

efficacy has been established in more limited conditions, group randomized designs, replication studies, and studies focused on scale-up or national initiatives.

In addition, REESE may support a few well-focused conferences or workshops related to the goals of the program. Budgets are expected to be related to the duration of the event and the number of participants. Typical costs are around \$100,000. Proposals should include a conceptual framework for the conference, a draft agenda, a possible participant list, and the outcomes or products that will result from the conference.

NSF expects to spend \$29 million to make between 23-40 awards for the competition in FY 2011, pending availability of funds: approximately 5-10 Pathways, 5-10 Synthesis, 10-15 Empirical, and 3-5 Large Empirical awards.

Address questions to REESE program officers, telephone: (703)292-8650, email: DRLREESE@nsf.gov
The full solicitation is available at: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2010/nsf10586/nsf10586.htm?WT.mc_id=USNSF_25&WT.mc_ev=click

Applications Wanted for 2011 NIH Director's Pioneer Award and 2011 NIH Director's New Innovator Award Programs

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Pioneer Awards (RFA-RM-10-008) are designed to support individual scientists of exceptional creativity who propose pioneering and possibly transforming approaches to major challenges in biomedical and behavioral research. "The term 'pioneering' is used to describe highly innovative approaches that have the potential to produce an unusually high impact on a broad area of biomedical or behavioral research, and the term 'award' is used to mean a grant for conducting research, rather than a reward for past achievements."

The announcement broadly defines biomedical and behavioral research as "encompassing scientific investigations in the biological, behavioral, clinical, social, physical, chemical, computational, engineering, and mathematical sciences that have the potential to improve public health."

Applications for projects that are extensions of ongoing research are not eligible. Research proposed must reflect ideas substantially different from those already being pursued in the investigator's laboratory or elsewhere. While a new research direction may have as its foundation the applicant's prior work and expertise, it cannot be an obvious extension or scaling up of a current research enterprise.

Pioneer awardees are required to commit at least 51 percent of their research effort to activities supported by the Pioneer Award program. Investigators who were not selected for an award in prior years may submit applications this year; however, all applications must be submitted as "new" applications regardless of any previous submission to the program. Applications are due September 13, 2010. For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-10-008.html>.

NIH Director's New Innovator

NIH created the NIH Director's New Innovator (DP2) Award program in 2007. The program, a High-Risk Research initiative within the Common Fund, is designed to support a small number of early stage investigators of exceptional creativity who propose bold and highly innovative new research approaches that have the potential to produce a major impact on broad, important problems in biomedical and behavioral research. The program complements ongoing efforts by the agency to fund early stage investigators through investigator-initiated grants.

The research proposed for a New Innovator Award may be in any scientific area relevant to the mission

of NIH but need not be in a conventional biomedical or behavioral discipline. The Award's focus is on innovation and potential impact. Investigators not selected for an award in prior years may submit applications this year as long as they retain their early stage investigator (ESI) eligibility. An ESI is a new investigator who has not competed successfully for a significant NIH independent research award and is within ten years of completing his/her terminal research degree or is within ten years of completing medical residency or the equivalent.

New Innovator Awards will be for up to \$300,000 in direct costs each year for five years, plus applicable Facilities and Administrative costs to be determined at the time of the award. Applications are due September 2010. For more information on how to apply see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-10-009.html>.

Advancing Novel Science in Women's Health Research (PAS-10-226)

Recent research reports have established the importance of studying issues specific to women, including the scientific and clinical importance of analyzing data separately for females and males. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), led by the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) and cosponsored by the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) and the NIH institutes and centers (ICs), is seeking research applications designed to promote innovative, interdisciplinary research that will advance new concepts in women's health research and the study of sex/gender differences.

ORWH is especially interested in new interdisciplinary research to advance studies on how sex and gender factors affect women's health; however, proposals addressing all areas of women's health and/or sex/gender research are invited. Areas of interest include: lifespan, sex/gender determinants, health disparities/differences and diversity, interdisciplinary research, diseases and conditions that affect women, methodological advances, quality of life, prevention, treatment and treatment outcomes, and biological and behavioral basis of sex and gender differences.

NIH anticipates that \$4 million in funding will be available for FY 2011. The total project period for applications submitted in response to the funding opportunity announcement may not, however, exceed two years. **Applications are due October 16, 2010.** For more information and/or to apply see:

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAS-10-226.html>.

Mentored Career Development Award to Promote Faculty Diversity

In recognition of a "unique and compelling need to promote diversity in the biomedical, behavioral, clinical, and social sciences research workforce, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) has issued a funding opportunity announcement (FOA), the Mentored Career Development Award to Promote Faculty Diversity/Re-Entry in Biomedical Research, soliciting applications designed to increase the number of highly trained investigators from diverse backgrounds or who have experienced an interruption in their research careers. The FOA is targeted toward individuals whose basic and clinical research interests are grounded in the advanced methods and experimental approaches needed to solve problems related to cardiovascular, pulmonary, and hematologic diseases in the general and health disparities populations.

The program is designed to provide research development opportunities for non-tenured science faculty from diverse backgrounds and for non-tenured re-entry science faculty from varying levels of research experience. The research proposed must be directly responsive to the mission of the NHLBI.

Letters of Intent are due September 1, 2010 and Applications are due October 1, 2010. For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HL-11-022.html>.

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