COSSA Washington UPDATE

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In This Issue

COSSA 30th Anniversary Annual Meeting Adds NSF and NIJ Directors as Speakers

The COSSA Annual Meeting and 30th Anniversary celebration, which will take place on Wednesday, November 2 and Thursday, November 3, has added National Science Foundation director Subra Suresh and National Institute of Justice director John Laub to its list of speakers. The directors join Rep. David Price, Census Bureau Director Robert Groves, and NSF Deputy Director Cora Marrett as key participants. The event will also include a keynote address by Thomas Mann of the Brookings Institution on the political landscape of the past 30 years as well as panels on the contributions of the social/behavioral sciences to public policy, a look ahead at new data and research opportunities in these sciences, and concurrent sessions on STEM Education and Demographics and Immigration policy. On Thursday morning, sessions will examine funding for science in these difficult economic times. Pre-meeting registration will remain open until October 24. The deadline for the special hotel rate has been extended until October 14. The full agenda, so far, is here. We hope you can join us.

FY 2012 Begins: CR Funds Government Until November 18

In what has become routine in recent years, the Congress failed to complete the FY 2012 appropriations process by the start of the new fiscal year on October 1. After passing a five-day Continuing Resolution (CR) to cover a recess period, Congress returned and on October 4 completed action on a new CR that will fund government agencies and programs until November 18.

At the moment, the House has cleared six of the twelve spending bills and the Senate one. The expectation remains that the process will finish with an Omnibus Appropriations bill that will include all twelve bills or a series of Minibuses that could include three bills apeice. Whether that will occur before the Super Committee on Deficit Reduction issues its recommendations by November 23 (if they reach some agreement), or after, is unclear.

In the meantime, Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) announced that he wants to bring three more spending bills to the Senate floor, including Commerce, Justice, Science, which funds the National Science Foundation, the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the National Institute of Justice, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Over in the House the large Labor, Health and Human Services, Education spending bill has not seen any action other than the announcement by the Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-MT) of numbers that he has proposed (see following story).

House Chairman Announces His Recommendations for Labor, HHS, ED Spending Bill

On September 29, the House Appropriations Committee's Republican leadership released its draft of the FY 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services(HHS), Education (ED) spending bill. The measure had not been marked up by the Appropriations Subcommittee prior to its release. Overall, the measure provides $153.4 billion in discretionary funding, $4 billion and 2.5 percent below the FY 2011 enacted funding level and $27.5 billion below the President's budget request.

Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA), Ranking Democrat on the full House Appropriations Committee, released a statement stressing that the numbers released "had never been reviewed, amended, or voted on by the full committee." He further emphasized that: "This draft bill represents the ideological position of one committee member - the subcommittee chairman," Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-MT). Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) Ranking Democrat on the Labor, HHS, ED Appropriations Subcommittee, similarly expressed her concern regarding "reports that the Chairman has no plans to convene a meeting of our subcommittee to consider and mark up this legislation. While this posting of the Chairman's proposals is interesting, it is by no means an acceptable substitute for public debate and amendment. The Chairman by himself is not the subcommittee." At this point, neither the subcommittee nor the full Appropriations Committee has scheduled any action on the bill and accordingly there is no accompanying report.

For the **National Institutes of Health** (NIH) the proposed bill contains $31.7 billion, $1 billion and 3.3 percent above the FY 2011 funding level. This sum is $1.2 billion more than provided in the comparable Senate committee-approved bill. The draft, however, does not provide funding to create a new National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). The measure provides $193.9 million to continue the National Children's Study versus the $189 million provided by the Senate. It also provides $556.9 million to the NIH Common Fund; the Senate provided $537.8 million.

The proposed bill includes $5.6 billion for the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC), a reduction of $52 million and one percent below the FY 2011 funding level and $220 million and 3.7 percent below the President's request. Additionally, the bill includes a rescission of $1 billion for the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), a provision of the Affordable Care Act. The Senate Appropriations Committee's bill includes $5.82 billion for the CDC.

The House proposed bill provides $136.7 million in total funding, approximately $2 million below the FY 2011 funding level for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). In FY 2011 NCHS received $30 million from PPHF. The Senate Committee's bill provided NCHS a FY 2012 base budget of $138.7 million, consistent with FY 2011 funding levels. In addition, the Senate provided NCHS $35 million in PPHF funding, providing NCHS a total budget of $173.7 million in FY 2012, a three percent increase above the FY 2011 funding level and 27 percent more than provided in the House measure.

For the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** (AHRQ) the House proposed bill allocates $348 million in total funding. The House proposes to eliminate AHRQ's current comparative effectiveness research program funded at a base level of $21 million in FY 2011. At the same time, the House supplants this funding with the $24 million mandatory transfer from the new Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) Trust Fund. This sum is 13 percent below the FY 2011 funding level. The elimination of the $1 billion available through PPHF eliminates the $12 million from the Fund AHRQ received in FY 2011.

The Senate Committee-approved bill provided AHRQ a base budget of $372 million in FY 2012, consistent with the FY 2011 funding level. Additionally, the Committee supplements AHRQ's base budget with $12 million from the PPHF and $24 million from the PCOR Fund transfer. The supplemental funding from these mandatory funds would provide AHRQ a total budget of $408 million in FY 2012, consistent with the FY 2011 funding level and 17 percent more than provided in the House's bill.

The Chairman's proposals for the **Institute of Education Sciences** (IES) include funding at the FY 2011 levels for research, development, and dissemination ($199.8 million), Statistics ($108.3 million), Assessment ($138.6 million), and Statewide Data Systems ($42.2 million). The Chairman accepted the Administration's proposed increase for the Regional Educational Laboratories, from $57.5 million in FY 2011 to $69.7 million in FY 2012.

The House bill accepts the Administration's recommendation that the **Javits Fellowship Program,** which awards need-based support to graduate students in the social sciences, arts, and humanities, get subsumed under the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program. However, it did not accept the proposed increase of almost $10 million to the GAANN program to help fund the Javits fellows. The Senate Committee bill keeps Javits as a separate program. The House bill, like the Senate and the Administration, eliminates funding for the **Thurgood Marshall Legal Education Opportunities** program.

The **Title VI and Fulbright-Hays** international education and foreign language programs, cut by 40 percent in FY 2011, received even less in the House-proposed FY 2012 bill, $66.7 million compared to $75.7 million in FY 2011, and $125.9 million in FY 2010. The House bill also eliminates all funding for the **Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE**), rejecting the

Administration's request of $150 million to create a "First in the World" initiative. The Senate Committee recommended $19.6 million for FIPSE.

The **Bureau of Labor Statistics** would receive $620.2 million from the House proposal, about $10 million more than FY 2011. The Senate Committee allocated $611.2 million. The Administration had asked for $647 million.

NSF 'Introduces Science Across Virtual Institutes' (SAVI)

The National Science Foundation (NSF), in an attempt to expand its international activities, has introduced "an important NSF-wide opportunity" called Science Across Virtual Institutes (SAVI).

According to Director Subra Suresh in a Dear Colleague letter to the scientific community, "SAVI is an innovative concept to foster interactions among scientists and educators around the globe based on the principle that excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) research and education exists in many parts of the world, and that scientific advances can be accelerated by scientists, engineers, and educators working together wherever they are."

Commenting further, Suresh says, "SAVI will focus on interactions between cohesive teams of researchers across national borders and takes advantage of existing U.S. and foreign investments in frontier research by leveraging complementary intellectual strengths and sharing unique research infrastructures. Virtual institutes will serve as research hubs in which new ideas originate, multidisciplinary research is fostered, diversity is valued, and long-term professional networks are developed between U.S. researchers and students and their international counterparts."

NSF intends to accomplish the following specific objectives through SAVI:

- Support collaborative research initiated by STEM researchers/educators at the frontiers in all fields supported by NSF;
- Stimulate networking among NSF-funded U.S. researchers with complementary strengths and common interests to form coherent research teams, and become virtual institutes;
- Facilitate STEM research and education partnerships among NSF-funded research centers/institutes (both virtual and real) and their international counterparts;
- Provide students, postdocs and junior faculty opportunities for research experiences abroad that lead to long-lasting international collaborations; and
- Strengthen connections between NSF and counterpart STEM research funding organizations around the globe by leveraging each other's investments in fundamental research and human resource development.

Among the activities, NSF will support through SAVI are the following:

- Joint research activities that will advance science, engineering, and STEM learning more effectively than individual national teams working independently;
- Joint meetings of SAVI team members that promote synergy;
- Workshops, advanced study institutes, and symposia;
- Joint seminar series, college-level courses;
- Co-mentoring of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows;
- Long-term research exchange visits for junior faculty; and
- Opportunities for focused summer research experiences abroad for U.S. undergraduate students.

According to NSF, SAVI funds are meant to serve as "glue" to facilitate building of solid foundations for virtual institutes. Depending on the extent of SAVI-like activities already supported by existing awards and the size of proposed virtual institute, the budget of a SAVI award is expected to vary from $50,000 to $400,000 per year for up to five 5 years. NSF funds will support only the U.S. participants. SAVI awards are meant to facilitate initial catalytic efforts, and NSF and the international counterpart funding organizations expect a successful SAVI to become a self-sustainable virtual institute after SAVI funding has ended.

NSF has supported a number of "virtual" collaborations over the years. The National Consortium on Violence Research (NCOVR), directed by former COSSA President Al Blumstein of Carnegie Mellon University, existed for 11 years from the mid-1990s and to the mid-2000s and built a "virtual" group of researchers across state and international boundaries.

For more information about SAVI go to: http://www.nsf.gov/savi.

NSF Makes First I-CORPS Awards: Decision Scientist Among the Grantees

In late July 2011, National Science Foundation (NSF) director Subra Suresh announced that his agency would begin a new effort "to help develop scientific and engineering discoveries into useful technologies, products and processes." Called the NSF Innovation Corps (I-Corps) program, the idea is to "connect NSF-funded scientific research with the technological, entrepreneurial and business communities to help create a stronger national ecosystem for innovation that couples scientific discovery with technology development and societal needs."

NSF announced a competition for I-Corps grants, to "strategically identify these nascent concepts and leverage its investment in basic research for technology innovation. To do so successfully-and to address the national need for economic growth-will require a public-private partnership."

On October 6, NSF announced the first recipients of I-Corps Grants. According to NSF the awards span "a broad range of target products, geographic locales and research fields, the teams will receive guidance from private- and public-sector experts, participate in a specially designed training curriculum, and receive $50,000 to begin assessing the commercial readiness of their technology concepts."

Among the initial 21 grantees was Ali Abbas of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, whose project is titled *IDecideFast - A web-based application for effective decision making for the layperson*. Abbas, who has received previous funding from the Decision Risk and Management Science program of NSF's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Science (SBE) directorate, hopes to test his research findings in real world applications through a web-based decision support system. He is interested in applying his system to the automobile industry and medical decision making. He is also working with teens at the Juvenile Detention Center in Champaign County, IL.

For more information about I Corps go to: **http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps.**

DOT Calls for Abstracts for Transportation Workforce Summit

The Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Council of University Transportation Centers, will sponsor a National Transportation Workforce Summit, which will take place from April 24-26, in Washington, DC.

The Summit Steering and Program Committees are inviting abstracts on any discipline related to the transportation workforce from educators, researchers, practitioners, and organizations that will foster a cross-cutting dialog on the transportation workforce of the future. Abstract submissions may be as text or video. **The Abstracts are due on November 11, 2011.**

The Summit will deal with all modes of transportation, the range of occupations in transportation from technicians through professional, and the variety of educational experiences to develop and improve individuals' competencies and skills. It hopes to establish a National Strategic Framework for Transportation Workforce Development that will link education and training to workforce development policies and programs.

Send completed abstract submission forms by email to John Collura atcollura@ecs.umass.edu.

The Summit agenda and other information can be found at www.cutcworkforce.com.

Briefing on Economic Census Held on Capitol Hill

When the House Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Subcommittee produced its recommendations on the FY 2012 budget, it significantly reduced the funding for the U.S. Census Bureau's Periodic Censuses and Programs account (see Update, July 25, 2011). Reacting to the proposed cut, Director Robert Groves suggested that this could put the conduct of the 2012 Economic Census (EC) in danger. Although the Senate improved the budget somewhat and its report indicated explicit support for the EC (see Update, September 26, 2011), the Bureau still remains concerned about its ability to carry out this survey, while trying to maintain support for its other important work.

L-R: Tim Maney, U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Charles Schultze, Brookings Institution; Katharine Abraham, Council of Economic Advisers; William Shobe, University of Virginia; J. Steven Landefeld, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

With all of this to consider, the American Economic Association (AEA), with support from COSSA and many other groups, including other COSSA members, the American Sociological Association, American Statistical Association, Population Association of America, and the Population Reference Bureau, presented a briefing on Capitol Hill extolling the importance of the EC to the federal government, state and local governments, and the nation's businesses. Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), and Reps. John Campbell (R-CA) and Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) were the congressional co-hosts of the briefing. Former COSSA President and upcoming 30th Anniversary Annual Meeting Speaker Charles Schultze of the Brookings Institution moderated the proceedings. Schultze is also chairman of the AEA's Government Relations Committee.

Schultze noted that some version of the economic census has been conducted since 1810. Since the late 1940s Congress has mandated the Census Bureau to conduct the EC every five years in those ending in 2 and 7. The 2012 version will gather data on over 28 million business establishments, and will include a census of manufacturing.

Katharine Abraham, a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, provided illustrations of the importance of these data for federal policy. She noted that federal policy makers use them to: "understand the state of the economy and forecast future economic conditions; allocate federal funds to state and local governments; and to make informed policy choices and implement existing policy." The importance of conducting the survey every five years is exacerbated, Abraham argued, by the "dynamism of the U.S. economy." In 2007, 40 percent of U.S. firms were less than five years old, she told the audience of over 100.

The EC's "data is critical to the reliability of economic accounts," Abraham asserted, since even a ½ percentage point lower in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has a significant impact on federal deficit projections. She illustrated how data from the EC impact public policy including: Defense Department planning for assessing the economic effects on military base closures; forecasting the demand for transportation infrastructure and equipment; and implementing the Affordable Care Act's small employer premium tax credit.

Steve Landefeld, director of the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), called the EC "the foundation for U.S. economic statistics." He focused on the EC's importance to GDP and other key macroeconomic statistics. According to Landefeld, the EC provides updates for levels and weights for GDP components and updates the sample frame for the monthly and quarterly surveys used to estimate GDP. The EC data are also essential, the BEA director declared, to constructing the integrated and balanced framework of the U.S. Input-Output accounts.

Economic Census Important to the Fiscal Health of Business

Tim Maney of the public affairs office of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce spoke to the necessity of the EC's information to provide a "comprehensive picture" of the "fiscal health of business." He emphasized that there was simply no alternative to the EC "for standardized data" suggesting it was the "Gold Standard" of consistent economic data. Maney also noted the importance for small businesses, in that the EC provides data for planning and includes local information to help retailers and restaurants. Without the EC, Maney concluded, "market uncertainties" would significantly increase.

Finally, William Shobe of the University of Virginia's Center for Economic and Policy Studies discussed the importance of EC data for: state revenue forecasting, policy evaluation, impact analysis and economic development, and workforce planning. He also made the case that collecting economic data must remain a federal responsibility. Shobe justified this conclusion by asserting that federal data collection allows for huge economies of scale and that economic activity has big spillovers across state boundaries. He also suggested that such data collections would be difficult for states to "pull off" and would involve "costly coordination."

For more information and copies of the slides go to:
http://www.aeaweb.org/committees/Govt_Relations/briefings_presentations.php.

Justice Policy Coalition Presents Session on Cutting Corrections' Costs and Populations

On September 27, the Criminology and Criminal Justice Coalition, comprised of COSSA members the American Society of Criminology and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, presented a congressional briefing on *Cutting Corrections Costs: Opportunities with Evidence-Based Practices*.

Speaking at the briefing were: James Austin, president of the JFA Institute and former director of the Institute of Crime, Justice, and Corrections at the George Washington University; Dennis Schrantz, director of the Northpointe Center for Justice Innovation and Leadership in Michigan; and LaDonna Thompson, Commissioner of the Department of Corrections in Kentucky. Todd Clear, Dean of the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University and former President of both sponsoring organizations, served as the moderator.

All three speakers indicated the importance of scientific research and data production to reducing correctional populations and costs of incarceration. They pointed out that much of the research and data have been supported by the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, both of which face significant funding challenges (see Update, July 25, and September 26, 2011).

Austin presented the data relating U.S. crime rates and incarceration and noted that despite recent significant declines in crime, the rate of incarceration remains high. However, in recent months under pressure from state budget difficulties, court decisions, and a growing recognition that the science has produced evidence that continuing the high rates of incarceration may be counterproductive, the movement to reduce the number of people in prisons has gained momentum.

For Austin, the goal is to find the most effective ways to reduce jail, prison, parole and probation populations, while ensuring the recidivism rates do not increase and hopefully decline and that crime rates do not increase. He discussed examples of proposed reductions in prison and jail populations in California, Kentucky, Maryland and New Orleans. The scientific and technological evidence that allows this to occur, according to Austin, include: population simulation models, offender risk assessments, cost-benefit analyses, and enhanced data systems. Using these practices, Austin suggested that the U.S. could reduce its prison population from the current 1.5 million to around 700,000 by 2016.

Closing Prisons and Improving Reentry Policies

Schranz reported on efforts to close 20 prisons in Michigan during the next five years. He cited the evidence that "there is little direct relationship between incarceration and crime and that the cost-benefit of imprisonment is not the best way to reduce crime (for a discussion of this evidence see Update, February 22, 2011). He also noted that the recidivism rate for former prisoners who serve one to five years is about the same. Schranz also indicated that the evidence suggests that prison costs are skyrocketing not because of incarceration rates, but by the sheer size of the prison system that includes personnel costs and benefits, health care for prisoners, and utility costs. The size of the prison system is driven more by policy decisions than by crime, he added.

Using the Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative as the starting point for "complete system change," according to Schranz, Michigan seeks to meet the goal of closing 20 prisons. More investment in effective policing to reduce crime, community programs, and educational and training programs leading to employment, are part of the package that can achieve this, Schranz concluded.

Commissioner Sullivan stressed the importance of grant funds, legislative changes, and technical assistance to her efforts to cut correction costs in Kentucky. She argued that research "enables us to determine what programs and where they are needed based on risk, the justification to implement evidence-based programs, and to determine if pilot programs should be expanded." She described how Kentucky's legislature has provided support for changing the system for assessing risk and reentry programs. Technical assistance has allowed her state to move from a Transition from Prison to a Community Initiative Model that includes a Justice Reinvestment Initiative.

Improving Student Performance: Brookings' Hamilton Project Has New Proposals

On September 27, the Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution held a forum to highlight new policy ideas and perspectives on how to improve student performance in K-12 education. In conjunction with the forum the Hamilton Project released a new strategy paper and three new policy proposals.

According to the paper, teachers and schools have the ability to transform the living standard of Americans. Evidence shows that the single most important factor in determining an individual's lifetime earnings and standard of living is their level of education. Much of the research on education and education reform has shown that the single most important ingredient in a child's education is a strong teacher.

Over the past century investments in education have boosted the productivity and earnings of American workers and helped develop a productive and innovative workforce. However, those gains have stagnated and even declined in the last 30 years. The U.S. now has among the highest rates of per pupil spending of OECD countries, yet ranks behind other industrialized countries on most measures of achievement and educational attainment. Where once the nation led the world in high school and college graduation rates, it now lags behind.

The lack of education contributes to declining real incomes for most of the American work force. Whereas 50 years ago you could work your way into the middle class with only a high school diploma, now employers are requiring some level of postsecondary education. The real earnings of the median working age man in the United States have declined by $13,000 or nearly 30 percent in real terms over the past 40 years, returning the level of real earnings for the average working man to a level of the 1950's.

While education alone cannot fix these problems, it is difficult to imagine a solution that does not involve substantial changes to the education system. Over the past decade, educational reforms have increasingly turned to assessments to hold teachers and schools accountable for student test scores. Yet critics argue that these assessments lead teachers to teach to the test at the expense of actual student learning. Derek Neal of the University of Chicago outlined a plan to create better assessments and accountability systems in his policy paper New Assessments for Improved Accountability. His new assessment system would use two different styles of examinations: one traditional test to evaluate student achievement, and a new examination to evaluate teacher performance along with non-test metrics such as classroom observations and school inspections.

School Management and Organization Reforms Can Help Too

Another strategy paper presented at the conference suggests that more could be done around less controversial aspects of school reform. Organizing Schools to Improve Student Achievement: Start Times, Grade Configurations, and Teacher Assignments by Jonah Rockoff of the Columbia Business School and Brian Jacob of the University of Michigan looks at reforms to the management or organization of schools. In the paper they describe three organizational reforms that recent evidence suggests have the potential to increase K-12 student performance at modest costs: (1) Starting school later in the day for middle and high school students; (2) Shifting from a system with separate elementary and middle schools to one with schools that serve students in kindergarten through grade eight; and (3) Managing teacher assignments by allowing them to gain experience by teaching the same grade level for multiple years or having teachers specializing in the subject where they appear most effective.

Michael Greenstone and Adam Looney, who authored the Hamilton Project strategy paper, believe there is reason to be optimistic about the future of education. Despite setbacks and the current political climate, evidence has shown that some small and large scale reforms have been found to spur improvements in student achievement. Greenstone and Looney believe it is necessary to make greater investments in education reform to "reinvigorate our existing system of education" and to increase of productivity and ingenuity. While they admit that the process involves a number of difficult choices both politically and financially, they say "the students of today and the labor force of tomorrow are counting on us to get it right."

For more information go to http://www.brookings.edu/events/2011/0927_k12_education.aspx.

Work and Family Research Latest Focus of Brookings' *Future of Children*

On October 5, *The Future of Children*, a joint project of Princeton University and the Brookings Institution, released its latest journal, *Work and Family*. The volume reviewed the problems encountered by working families and proposed policies aimed at reducing work and family pressures.

The last 50 years have seen tremendous changes for working families. Demographic forces such as the entry of mothers into the workforce and the rising number of children living with single parents has led to increased work and family pressure on families.

In the journal article *Changing Families, Changing Workplaces* Suzanne Bianchi of University of California at Los Angeles notes that between 1975 and 2009 the labor force rate of mothers with children under age eighteen increased from 47.4 percent to 71.6 percent. For mothers of children under age six, their share rose from 39.0 percent to 63.6 percent. That increase is also reflected in the number of mothers who are employed full time. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2009, 74 percent of all employed mothers worked full time, including 71 percent of mothers with children under age six. The article also points out that mothers are also returning to work after birth much sooner than women did 50 years ago. Among all women having their first child during the early 1960s, only 10 percent were back at work three months after the baby's birth; in 2001-03, it was 42 percent of mothers.

The article *The Role of the Government in Work-Family Conflict* by Heather Boushey of the Center for American Progress highlights the role of the federal government in providing programs that support workers. Many of the worker-support programs created in the 1930s and the decades following were enacted before married and single mothers entered the workforce in massive numbers, and do not adequately address the new family dynamic. Although more recently both federal and state governments have created childcare policies and programs, their benefits are out of reach for many families. The most notable law, the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, is available to only about half of all workers, leaving a disproportionate share of low wage workers with no access to job protected leave. Boushey argues "crafting a comprehensive government policy to ease work family conflict requires rethinking the basic labor standards and social insurance models that the United States has had in place since the 1930s."

No New Legislation Expected

Ron Haskins, co-director of the Center on Children and Families, suggested that given the state of the American economy and the growing federal deficit, prospects for federal legislation in the foreseeable future seems doubtful. Many of the authors believe these conditions suggest that state and local government as well as employers might play an increasingly important role in the creation of family friendly polices. Currently market forces are now shaping these policies with companies already allowing workers increased flexibility in order to retain their employees and save costs on retraining. However, workers who are lower paid, less educated, and on the bottom rung still are less likely than senior and highly skilled workers to have access to these benefits.

As more employers and states look into creating flexible work policies, Haskins in the policy brief he co-wrote with Jane Waldfogel of Columbia University and Sara McLanahan of Princeton University called for researchers to conduct more analyses of proposals for new federal and state work family policies and explore how community institutions such as schools, health care providers, and elder care programs can adapt their policies to better help families.

Work-family conflict promises to remain on the nation's agenda in both the public and private sectors for many years to come. The findings of this volume have three policy suggestions: expand the use of workplace flexibility; create work family policies that are more equitable, not just available to those in management of high demand sectors; and schools, the health care system, and community-based and other providers serving children and the elderly could and should do more to take pressures off family caregivers.

Boushey concludes that "Government also has a clear role to protect the welfare of children, the elderly, and the sick by setting standards to ensure that workers can meet their familial commitments. Updating the nation's basic labor standards and social insurance to address conflicts that arise between work and family today is the next step."

For more information about the briefing and to read the journal go to:

http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/journals/journal_details/index.xml?journalid=76.

Cyber Attacks and National Security Explored at AAAS Forum

On October 3, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Georgetown University's Program on Science in the Public Interest, and the American Chemical Society held an event titled "Cyber Attack: Crime, Terrorism, or National Security?" The event was the first in a four-segment public discussion series titled "Science and Society: Global Challenges."

The arrangement for the evening was very informal, instead of designated time segments for each speaker, those on the panel merely discussed relevant events and ideas and debated where they found it necessary. The discussion was steered in the appropriate direction by David Kestenbaum from National Public Radio. Sitting on the panel were Stewart Baker, author and former Assistant Secretary of Policy, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; John Steinbruner, Professor of Public Policy at the University of Maryland and Director of the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM); and a man identified only as James, an expert in the field whose identity and affiliation could not be identified for security purposes.

The conversation began with a discussion of "nightmare scenarios" - what sort of cyber attack the panelists believed feasible that would have a horrible impact. Panelists agreed that a prolonged attack on a power grid in the US would have disastrous effects. If a group could take down power from an area for a sustained period of time huge numbers of lives would be lost and there would be a breakdown of order. There would be little choice for the government but to meet the demands of the opposition.

Steinbruner noted that there is no documented case of a grid going down in this manner, but that there is a profound need for globally organized security-a sort of agreement that civilian power grids are out of bounds. James maintained that solutions for grid attacks or invasions of systems were to be found in improving technology. He compared our current security systems to people all having the same lock that could be opened with the same key. He called for randomized instruction sets to fix the problem. Baker tended to promote punishment as the solution, arguing that only by catching and punishing people for breaking into systems could we make others fear trying. Disagreements abounded among the panelists as they defended their different outlooks.

The next part of this series titled "Fukushima: Lessons Learned" will be held on October 24. For more information on this event and the others in the series please look here.

SRCD, PAA Seek Public Policy Fellows

The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), a COSSA member, seeks applications for its 2012-2013 Policy Fellowships. There are two types of Fellowships: Congressional and Executive Branch. Both provide Fellows with the opportunity to come to Washington, DC, where they can use their research skills in child development to inform public policy. Fellows work as resident scholars within their federal agency or Congressional office placements.

Fellowships are full-time immersion experiences and run from September 1st through August 31st. The SRCD Office for Policy and Communications in Washington facilitates the Fellows' experience and is available as a resource throughout the year.

Applicants must have a doctoral-level degree in any relevant discipline (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., J.D.). Both early-career and advanced professionals are encouraged to apply. The deadline for applications is **December 15, 2011.** For more information and application instructions, please click here.

Population Association of America Announcement

The Population Association of America (PAA), a COSSA member, is also seeking candidates to participate in the Science and Technology Fellowship Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

The fellowship provides an opportunity for researchers to come to Washington, DC and use population science, outside of the academic setting, to inform public policy. The fellow will spend a year working in a federal agency.

The fellowship is open to doctoral scientists from any discipline relevant to population research. Both early and mid- career professionals are encouraged to apply.

PAA is now accepting applications for the 2012-2013 term. **The deadline to apply is December 15, 2011.**

For more information or to apply for the fellowship, please go to:
http://www.populationassociation.org/government-affairs/paa-fellowship/

PCORI Announces $26 Million Pilot Projects Grant Program

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) recently announced it first major funding opportunity, the Pilot Projects Grant Program. It intends to commit up to $13 million per year for two years in support of approximately 40 awards totaling $26 million. Funding may be requested for up to $250 thousand in direct costs per year for up to two years.

The Pilot Project Grants Program has three purposes:

1. The applications themselves will assist PCORI with ongoing development and enhancement of national research priorities for patient-centered outcomes research.
2. The Program will support the collection of preliminary data that can be used to advance the field of patient-centered outcomes research, providing the platform for a future PCORI research agenda.
3. The Program will support the identification of methodologies that can be used to advance patient-centered outcomes research as well as identify gaps where methodological research needs further development.

Letters of intent are due by November 1, 2011, and applications are due by December 1, 2011. Additional information about the PCORI funding announcement is available on its website.

NIH/PEPFAR Collaboration for Advancing Implementation Science in Prevention of Maternal-Child HIV Transmission

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), in collaboration with the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, seek applications for implementation science projects that will inform the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) as they develop more efficient and cost-effective methods to deliver proven interventions for prevention of maternal-child HIV transmission (PMTCT). Participating NIH institutes, centers, and offices include: Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Fogarty International Center (FIC), Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Mental Health (NIMH), the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), and the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH).

According to the funding announcement (RFA-HD-12-210), globally more than 1,000 children are newly infected with HIV each day. The majority of these new cases are in sub-Saharan Africa and the primary mode of HIV acquisition for infants is through mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. PEPFAR's commitment to the goal of eliminating new pediatric infections by 2015 depends heavily upon successful implementation of efficacious PMTCT interventions.

Structural factors within country health systems are one of the largest challenges to implementing effective programs. The success in resource-rich countries in perinatal prevention lies not just in what antiretroviral regimen is provided for PMTCT but the integration of the entire array of services needed for identification, care and treatment of the HIV-infected woman and her infant in the antepartum obstetric and child health infrastructure. Implementation of PMTCT in resource-limited countries offers a unique opportunity to link prevention and treatment efforts, rather than viewing these as competing efforts, according to the announcement.

In addition to better understanding of clinic delivery systems, research is needed on reasons women do not access such services. Stigma, discrimination, and violence are also barriers to uptake of services. Even in settings where HIV counseling and testing services are available, the impact and the nature of social stigma associated with HIV infection may inhibit women from accessing services to learn their infection status. Therefore, steps to prevent HIV-transmission to their infant need more complete assessment and characterization. Further research in this area is needed, including potentially ameliorating interventions.

The following questions are examples of implementation science questions related to PMTCT and maternal/pediatric HIV care that could be considered:

- What are optimal ways to enhance identification of HIV-infected pregnant women?
- How can community-based strategies effectively increase PMTCT uptake (and reduce stigma), especially with program scale-up?
- Does family and male partner involvement increase PMTCT uptake and successful completion of the cascade?
- How can family and male partner involvement in PMTCT be increased?
- What are the best means to prevent, detect, and provide prompt treatment/prophylaxis for incident HIV infection during pregnancy and/or breastfeeding?
- What are barriers to and effective strategies for provision and monitoring of CD4 testing and (where available) of viral load testing and for provision of antiretroviral treatment for pregnant and breastfeeding HIV-infected women eligible for therapy for their own health?
- In a variety of settings (urban, rural), what are barriers to and effective strategies for providing more complex antiretroviral prophylaxis regimens to HIV-infected women who do not qualify for ART at the present time?
- What are feasible and valid methods to measure PMTCT effectiveness for both maternal and infant outcomes at both the program and population levels?
- What are the best interventions to support the new WHO infant feeding recommendations for HIV-exposed infants?
- What are effective strategies to implement infant or maternal antiretroviral prophylaxis during breastfeeding?
- How has implementation of 2010 WHO PMTCT recommendations affected clinical outcomes, service delivery and program costs?
- What strategies are needed to optimize nutrition for the HIV-exposed infants and for their HIV-infected breastfeeding mothers (for example, optimal strategies to promote exclusive

breastfeeding through age 6 months; how to implement optimal complementary feeding at age 6 months in HIV-exposed infants; optimal strategies to ensure adequate nutrition for the breastfeeding mother)?

- What are the effect and impact of task shifting on PMTCT program scale-up in various settings, various levels of the health care system, and among different cadres of health workers?
- What are the best models to provide services (including diagnostic testing) to HIV-exposed infants?
- What is the role of traditional/complementary medicine providers in improving the uptake of PMTCT services?
- What is the optimal model for delivery of comprehensive care and treatment to HIV-infected women and their infants and children, including integration of PMTCT/HIV care with services for treatment of obstetric complications, co-infections (such as TB and hepatitis), and comorbid illnesses (such as diabetes)?
- What are the feasibility and impact on clinical outcomes and on efficiency (including cost-efficacy) of resource utilization of integrating care for HIV-infected mothers and their infants into routine maternal-child health services (e.g., immunization clinics)?
- What are interventions at the program, facility, community, and household levels that have greatest impact on retention in care, especially mothers and infants in the first 12 months postpartum?
- What are the appropriate timing, content, and setting (e.g., maternal child services, ART clinic) for voluntary family planning services to be provided to HIV-infected women?

Letters of Intent are due on January 28, 2012. Applications are due on February 28, 2012. More information is available here:http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HD-12-210.html

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