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Legislative Action Freezes to a Halt

The Washington, DC region is still digging out from the historic snowfall it witnessed over the weekend. In the interest of safety, the federal government has been closed since noon last Friday. Countless hearings and events have been postponed, further contracting what is already expected to be a tight couple of months for policy making before Members of Congress head home to the campaign trails later this year. The challenging 2016 calendar coupled with new reports on the state of the federal deficit promise to further complicate the already complicated and contentious annual appropriations process. If history is any indication, especially in an election year, we recommend that you sit tight and prepare yourself for what is likely to be long road to final FY 2017 appropriations, perhaps not culminating until after the November elections.

CONGRESSIONAL NEWS

Senate HELP Committee Begins Consideration of Companion Legislation to the House 21st Century Cures Act

Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP)
Committee, recently announced that the committee will hold the first of three executive sessions to consider legislation to address biomedical innovation. The legislation affects the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The bills would serve as the companion legislation to the 21st Century Cures Act passed by the House last summer (see Update, July 14, 2015). The executive sessions are planned for February 9, March 9, and April 6. Alexander stressed that the Committee worked throughout 2015 to produce the bills that are now ready for the full committee to consider, emphasizing the urgency required by the Senate to "finish its work and turn into law these ideas."

Alexander specifically highlighted the committee's work on legislation "to achieve interoperability of electronic health records" (EHRs). The Committee recently released a discussion draft of legislation along with a summary addressing health information technology (HIT), including EHRs, and is seeking comments. The discussion draft includes provisions to assist doctors and hospitals in improving quality of care for patients, establish Transparent Ratings on Usability and Security to Transform Information Technology (TRUST IT), provide the authority to investigate and establish deterrents to information blocking practices that interfere with appropriate sharing, foster a "network of networks" including establishing "an initial set of common data elements," ensure that registries are certified to transmit and receive from certified HIT, provide "certification and development of patient-centered health record technology so that patients can access their health information through secure and user-friendly software, which may update automatically," secure EHRs, and direct the Governmental Accountability Office (GAO) "to review methods for securely matching patient records to the correct patient."

According to the Chairman, at least seven "bipartisan bills" are expected to be considered at the February session:

- Bipartisan HELP Committee legislation to improve Electronic Health Records;
- The FDA Device Accountability Act of 2015 (S. 1622): Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Al Franken (D-MN);
- The Advancing Targeted Therapies for Rare Diseases Act of 2015 (S. 2030): Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Burr (R-NC), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Orin Hatch (R-UT);
- The Advancing Research for Neurological Diseases Act of 2015 (S. 849): Senators Johnny Isakson (R-GA), and Christopher Murphy (D-CT);
- The Next Generation Researchers Act (S. 2014): Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Susan Collins (R-ME);
- The Enhancing the Stature and Visibility of Medical Rehabilitation Research at the NIH Act (S. 800): Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Orin Hatch (R-UT), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), and Susan Collins (R-ME); and
- Legislation regarding FDA regulation of duodenoscopes

Read on for more details.

FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION NEWS

NIH Highlights FY 2016 Legislative Mandates in Effect for the Agency

Included in the fiscal year (FY) 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113) signed into law by President Obama on December 18, 2015 are a number of legislative mandates prohibiting the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from using appropriated FY 2016 funding to
support certain research areas (see Update, December 18, 2015). A number of the mandates are a continuation of previous statutory limitations on the agency's funding and include the areas of gun control, anti-lobbying, restrictions and exceptions to restrictions on abortion, pornography on computer networks, needle distribution, dissemination of false or misleading information, and human embryo research. For more information, see the NIH notice, NOT-OD-16-044.

NSF Director Thanks Community for Support in FY 2016

In her most recent newsletter, National Science Foundation (NSF) Director France Córdova reviewed the final funding outlook for NSF for fiscal year (FY) 2016 and thanked NSF advocates for their support in combating attempts to place restrictions on the agency's funding: "Your strong support of NSF during this last year reinforced the importance of NSF’s mission to the nation and ensured that science, and scientists, will continue to drive where we fund research. With your help, language regarding directorate-specific allocations was not included in the final Consolidated Appropriations Act."

NIH Office of Disease Prevention to Create an Electronic Directory of Prevention Experts

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Disease Prevention (ODP), the lead NIH office "responsible for assessing, facilitating, and stimulating research in disease prevention and health promotion and disseminating the results of this research to improve public health," is launching an initiative to enhance the scientific rigor of NIH-funded research projects. ODP is seeking the assistance of the extramural research community in "developing a database of experts in research methods relevant to prevention research that can help Scientific Review Officers (SROs) identify reviewers for NIH grant applications."

Prospective experts are asked to complete ODP's Prevention Research Expertise Survey which will create an "electronic directory," including information about their scientific and grant review expertise. The directory will aid SROs in identifying appropriate individuals to serve on review committees, matching "the most qualified reviewers to specific grant applications." The information provided by respondents will not be shared with any organization or individual outside the federal government.

National Advisory Dental and Craniofacial Research Council Approves Concept Clearances

The National Advisory Dental and Craniofacial Research Council (NADCRC), the advisory body to the National Institute on Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), held an abbreviated session of its first quarter congressionally-mandated advisory council meeting to accommodate the East coast blizzard. The shortened session included a discussion of proposed research concept clearances to allow the Institute's program staff to move forward to develop funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) around creation of a mentored translation program and an implementation science and oral health program.

Read on for more details.

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2015

The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, a working group of 23 Federal
agencies, recently released its annual compendium of indicators, *America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-being, 2015*. The 17th report in an ongoing series includes 41 key indicators "on important aspect of children’s lives" culled from the "most reliable Federal statistics." The easily understood statistics in the report are "objectively based on substantial research." The report also reveals trends over time that are "representative of large segments of the population" and include indicators seven domains: "family and social environment, economic circumstances, health care, physical environment and safety, behavior, education, and health." The domains are "interrelated and can have synergistic effects on well-being." In addition, the 2015 report includes a special section on *Health Care Quality* among U.S. children and highlights "well-child and well-adolescents visits, preschool vision screenings, asthma management plans, and access to care." *America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2015*, continues the Forum's practice of highlighting "critical data gaps and challenges Federal statistical agencies" to address the identified gaps.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- DOD: Minerva Research Initiative ([WHS-AD-FOA-16-01](#))
- Department of Education Office of International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE):
  - Fulbright-Hays Group Programs Abroad, Short Term/Long Term ([January](#))
  - Fulbright-Hays, Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad ([January](#))
  - Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language ([April](#))
  - American Overseas Research Centers ([May](#))
- NIH: [Click here for a list of recent funding opportunities](#).

**EVENTS CALENDAR**

- [Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention](#), San Diego, CA, January 28-30, 2016
- [American Psychosomatic Society Annual Scientific Meeting](#), Denver, CO, March 9-12, 2016
- [Southwestern Social Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Las Vegas, NV, March 22-27, 2016
- [Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting](#), Chicago, IL, March 23-26, 2016
- [Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting](#), Denver, CO, March 29-April 2, 2016
- [Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference](#), Seattle, WA, March 31-April 3, 2016
- [Society for Research on Adolescence Biennial Meeting](#), Baltimore, MD, March 31-April 2, 2016
- [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, IL, April 7-April 10, 2016

A list of COSSA members' annual meetings and other events can be found on the COSSA [webpage](#).

COSSA members who have an upcoming event they would like to see listed in the Events Calendar and on our website should send an email to [jmilton@cossa.org](mailto:jmilton@cossa.org).
COSSA’s 2016 Annual Meeting & Advocacy Day will take place on March 15 & 16. Register today!

Consortium of Social Science Associations

Members

Governing Associations

American Anthropological Association
American Association for Public Opinion Research
American Economic Association
American Educational Research Association
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Criminology
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association of American Law Schools
Law and Society Association
Linguistic Society of America
Midwest Political Science Association
National Communication Association
Population Association of America
Society for Personality and Social Psychology
Society for Research in Child Development

Membership Organizations

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
American Association of Geographers
American Evaluation Association
American Historical Association
American Psychosomatic Society
Association for Asian Studies
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations
Association of Research Libraries
Council on Social Work Education
Economic History Association
History of Science Society
Midwest Sociological Society
National Association of Social Workers
North American Regional Science Council
Rural Sociological Society
Social Science History Association
Society for Research on Adolescence
Society for Social Work and Research
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Society of Behavioral Medicine
Southern Political Science Association
Southern Sociological Society
Southwestern Social Science Association

Colleges and Universities

Arizona State University
Boston University
Brown University
Carnegie Mellon University
Clark University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Duke University
Fielding Graduate University
George Mason University
Georgetown University
Harvard University
Indiana University
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY
Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Michigan State University
New York University
Northwestern University
Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
Stanford University
Stony Brook University, SUNY
Texas A&M University
The George Washington University
The Ohio State University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of Chicago
University of Colorado, Boulder
University of Illinois
University of Iowa
University of Maryland
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
University of Oklahoma
University of Pennsylvania
University of South Carolina
University of Texas, Austin
University of Texas, San Antonio
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin, Madison
Virginia Tech
West Virginia University
Yale University

Centers and Institutes

American Academy of Arts and Sciences
American Academy of Political and Social Science
American Council of Learned Societies
American Institutes for Research
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research
The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research.