

# Policy Update: November 2017

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## SRCD News Related to Child and Family Policy

### SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship 2018-2019: Apply Now

SRCD is accepting applications for the SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Program for the year that begins on September 1, 2018 and ends on August 31, 2019. Through the program, SRCD places doctoral-level researchers in congressional and federal executive branch offices for full-year immersion experiences, where

fellows serve as resident scholars while learning about the work of the placement office in linking research and policy. Interested in learning more? Visit the SRCD Federal Policy Fellowships [webpage](#), send an email to [policyfellowships@srcd.org](mailto:policyfellowships@srcd.org), or call 202-800-0666.

To apply to the fellowship, click [here](#). Applications are due by **December 15, 2017**.

### **SRCD Pre-doctoral and Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowships: Call for Letters of Intent**

Policy decisions focusing on children and families take place at the state level as well as at the federal level. To extend its longstanding post-doctoral fellowship program focusing on federal child and family policy, SRCD is seeking letters of intent for two State Policy Fellowship Programs for the 2018-2019 academic year: the [Pre-doctoral State Policy Fellowship in Early Learning, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) and the [Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship in Early Childhood, funded by the Heising-Simons Foundation](#).

The goal of these programs is to provide participants at different levels of study and career development with firsthand experience in state policymaking, program implementation, and evaluation, while also providing state executive branch agencies greater access to child development research expertise. Academic mentors for those participating in both the pre- and post-doctoral programs are expected to have backgrounds relevant to, and interest in extending, their research on state early childhood policies and programs. More information about the State Policy Fellowships is available online at <https://www.srcd.org/professional-advancement/srcd-us-policy-fellowship-programs/state>. For questions, please email [policyfellowships@srcd.org](mailto:policyfellowships@srcd.org) or call 202-800-0666.

Letters of Intent are to be submitted to [policyfellowships@srcd.org](mailto:policyfellowships@srcd.org) by **December 22, 2017**. A Selection Committee will invite full applications from a subset.

### **New Social Policy Report and SPR Brief**

SRCD has recently released a new [Social Policy Report](#) and [Social Policy Report Brief](#) by Dr. Douglas Teti and colleagues entitled “Supporting Parents: How Six Decades of Parenting Research Can Inform Policy and Best Practice.” The report focuses on the importance of competent parenting for children’s development, and the need to expand policies, programs, and best practices in the United States to better support parents at risk and promote parenting competence. Visit the SRCD website or follow the embedded links to read the full

*Social Policy Report* and the two-page *Social Policy Report Brief*.

### **Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow**

Jameela Conway Turner, Ph.D., is a second-year Executive Branch Fellow whose placement is in the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in the Department of Justice. Click [here](#) to learn more about her work, including her contributions to the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI).

## **Legislative Branch Updates**

### **FY18 Appropriations Update: Disaster Aid Signed Into Law, Government Funding Set to Expire December 8**

On October 26, the president signed into law [H.R. 2266](#), the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements Act, 2017. This bill was previously passed by the House of Representatives on October 12 and by the Senate on October 24. It includes \$36.5 billion in disaster aid related to recent hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. Please see the [October edition of Policy Update](#) for additional details on this legislation.

The federal government is currently funded by a continuing resolution (CR) through December 8, 2017. To avoid a government shutdown, the House and Senate need to either pass another CR or work out a deal to pass all 12 appropriations bills before December 8. The House passed all 12 of its appropriations bills in a large omnibus spending package in September. Please see the [September appropriations update](#) for additional details.

### **House Passes Children's Health Insurance Program Legislation**

On November 3, the House of Representatives passed [H.R.3922](#), the “CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS Act” with a vote of 242-174. The legislation would extend funding for community health centers and other public health programs, and for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through FY2022. H.R.3922 would also reauthorize provisions of the current CHIP program and make adjustments to the federal matching rate after FY19. Please see the [October edition of Policy Update](#) for a detailed explanation of such provisions and changes to the matching rate. The bill also includes several offsets to fund CHIP, through cuts to the Prevention and Public Health Fund (which funds vaccinations, smoking cessation initiatives, and other

health programs), increased premiums for Medicare recipients making over \$500,000 a year, and limits to Medicaid benefits for lottery winners. Finally, H.R.3922 would reduce the grace period for health exchange plans and change regulations related to Medicaid third-party liability.

Funding for CHIP expired on September 30, but an extension bill has not yet passed both chambers of Congress. *Congressional Quarterly (CQ)* reports that most states have had some of their own CHIP funding left over to continue the program without an extension, but that “federal health officials have been funneling some leftover funds to the states that are in the most dire situations.” Further, *CQ* reports that the delay in passing the House bill is a result of disagreements over the proposed offsets, with the vote mostly falling on party lines due to Democrats' concern with the offsets. Ranking Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) criticized the legislation, stating “if this bill is partisan, it will never become law. It will go to the Senate and sit there...The vote shouldn’t be held today because this bill is going nowhere.” House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee Chairman Michael C. Burgess (R-TX) stressed the importance of passing the bill and stated that “the offsets are not draconian” in defense of the proposed cuts. H.R.3922 will now go to the Senate for consideration, but will likely face opposition. The Senate’s bipartisan version of the CHIP extension ([S.1827](#)) has passed out of committee but has not been considered by the full Senate.

### **House Passes Bill on Federal Evidence-Building**

On November 15, the House of Representatives passed [H.R. 4174](#), the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2017. This legislation, introduced by House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI), would enact into law and further build on many of the 22 recommendations made in the [final report](#) of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking (CEP). The CEP, which originated from bipartisan legislation introduced by Speaker Ryan and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), released its final report in September (see the [September 2017 edition of Policy Update](#) for additional coverage). The bill would, among other things, require federal agencies to come up with plans for increasing the openness of federal data, and would require all agencies to appoint a chief evaluation officer to “assess the coverage, quality, methods, consistency, effectiveness, independence, and balance of the portfolio of evaluations, policy research, and ongoing evaluation activities of the agency.” This legislation was previously approved by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on November 2. Senator Murray introduced a version of this bill in the Senate ([S. 2046](#)) on October 31.

## House Committee Hearing on Federal Efforts to Combat the Opioid Crisis

On October 25, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing entitled “Federal Efforts to Combat the Opioid Crisis: A Status Update on CARA and Other Initiatives.” Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) opened the hearing by describing the magnitude of the opioid crisis, providing the sobering statistic that 91 people die from opioid overdoses every day. He then stated the purpose of the hearing: to hear from federal agencies responsible for implementing the recently passed Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) and the 21st Century Cures Act. Walden stressed the importance of the committee hearing from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), stating that Congress’ requests for data from the agency have been “met with delay, excuses, and frankly inadequate response.” Ranking Member Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) then gave his opening statement, noting that the bipartisan CARA and 21st Century Cures Act are extremely important in expanding prevention, treatment, and curtailing the flow of opioids. However, he expressed disappointment that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) were not invited to the hearing, as most people access substance abuse treatment through health insurance coverage, with over a third of the population receiving health insurance coverage from programs that CMS oversees. He echoed the Chairman’s critique of the DEA’s response to Congress, explaining that the committee submitted questions to the DEA following a hearing on opioid distribution in rural West Virginia in March and just received answers this month. Both members indicated that Congress could learn and do more in combating the opioid crisis.

Witnesses from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) each spoke on their agency’s efforts and priorities in combating the opioid crisis. Discussion of current strategies and future initiatives included: understanding the difference between physical dependence and addiction; efforts to remove the stigma from addiction; implementation of the Department of Health and Human Services’ five strategies in combating the opioid crisis through grant competitions soliciting research on prevention, treatment, and recovery services; creating guidelines for prescribing opioids for chronic pain and interactive trainings for physicians to implement these guidelines; a focus on developing and implementing widespread evidence-based treatments; fostering public-private partnerships to work on developing effective non-addictive pain medications and expanding medication options to prevent and reduce overdoses; promoting research on the neurobiology of addiction; promoting services and implementation research in settings such as child care and criminal justice; and focusing on attacking supply through targeting criminal networks. Witnesses

included: Neil Doherty, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, DEA; Dr. Scott Gottlieb, Commissioner, FDA; Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz, Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, SAMHSA; Dr. Anne Schuchat, Principal Deputy Director, CDC; Dr. Nora Volkow, Director, NIDA, National Institutes of Health (NIH). To watch the hearing and read witness testimony, click [here](#).

### **Congressional Briefing on Prevention Across the Lifespan**

On October 31, the National Coalition on Health Care hosted a congressional briefing entitled “Prevention Across the Lifespan.” John Rother, President and CEO of the National Coalition on Health Care, opened the briefing by explaining that a key piece of his organization’s mission is health care affordability, and that stable funding sources for prevention programs can result in huge savings on health care costs in the long run. The briefing explored the importance of prevention programs across the lifespan and in many different health areas, but all presenters noted both the health outcome and cost benefits associated with prevention. Panelists discussed some of the major issues in health care today, including: that health care in the United States does not focus enough on primary care or prevention; that the U.S. is not getting a good value for its health care dollar; the lack of focus on the social determinates of health; the lack of public understanding about the difference between treatment and prevention; and the fact that public health systems often operate in an incongruent financial environment where they receive an influx of money when dealing with a crisis, but then are frequently underfunded until another crisis hits.

Presenters then discussed some of the prevention work their organizations focus on, particularly in the fields of vaccination, diabetes prevention, and healthy aging. Topics covered included: the large cost savings associated with childhood vaccination, with every dollar spent resulting in a savings of \$10.10; that the U.S. is doing very well at vaccinating very young children, but not very well at vaccinating older youth and adults; the importance of diabetes prevention programs in both reducing health care costs and lowering the risk of developing diabetes for those with prediabetes; and the growing evidence base for prevention programs for older adults, especially related to falls and chronic disease management. Presenters highlighted the cost-effectiveness of prevention programs, the need for more funding for prevention, and the ongoing need to provide clear, accessible information to people in order to counteract misinformation they may be receiving from other sources. Speakers included: Dr. Georges Benjamin, Executive Director, American Public Health Association; Amy Pisani, Executive Director, Every Child by Two; Meghan Riley, Vice President of Federal Government Affairs, American Diabetes Association; and Howard Bedlin, Vice President, National Council on Aging.

## **Congressional Briefing on the Science of Mind, Brain, and Behavior**

On November 7, five recipients of early career investigator awards from the Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS) presented on their research at a congressional briefing. Paula Skedsvold, Executive Director of FABBS, gave introductory comments. Three presentations focused on children's development:

- Dr. S. Alexandra Burt of Michigan State University described the associations between neighborhood poverty and the ability of children to show inhibitory control, or the capacity to put the brakes on a response once it is started. She noted the growing evidence that stressors in high poverty areas can affect the ways in which genes are expressed: such factors as neurotoxic exposure and harsh parenting can lead to the silencing of genes related to normal neural development. Yet the evidence indicates that not all children in high poverty areas show such problems, as there are protective experiences that allow genes to be expressed and brain development to proceed normally even under stressful circumstances. Her research focuses on understanding the factors underlying such resilience.
- Dr. Panayiota Kendeou of the University of Minnesota discussed the high percentage of children (31% in 2015) who score below the level of basic proficiency on the fourth grade reading National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP identifies these children as failing to make simple inferences and understand the overall meaning of texts. Kendeou's research focuses on the development and assessment of educational technology that aims to train young children in inference making skills. Interactive software to help children learn vocabulary words and respond to inferential questions while receiving personalized feedback is now being evaluated with 1st and 2nd graders who are having comprehension difficulties. Kendeou addressed how teachers can use the software to monitor children's progress and integrate the results into ongoing classroom instruction.
- Dr. Bethany Reeb-Sutherland of Florida International University noted that autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is estimated to affect 1 in 68 children in the United States, while anxiety disorder affects 10-15% of children and adolescents. Because early prevention and treatment efforts have the potential for stronger effects, developing ways to identify children at high risk of these disorders is important. Reeb-Sutherland's research focuses on the potential of giving joint consideration to behavioral and neural patterns of response for predicting the disorders. For example, regarding anxiety disorders, behavioral inhibition, or extreme wariness to social novelty, is relatively stable during childhood and serves as a strong predictor of anxiety diagnoses. Yet not all children with behavioral inhibition go on to have anxiety disorders. New work looking at brain responses to novelty indicates that adolescents who show the pattern of behavioral inhibition and also display greater neural response to novelty are more

likely to be diagnosed with anxiety. Joint consideration of behavioral responses (capacity for joint attention) and neural responses (contingent responses to stimulation) may also improve prediction of ASD.

The other presentations focused on improving patient and health care worker safety (Dr. Ayse P. Gurses, Johns Hopkins University), and exploring individual differences in brain activity (Dr. Greg Hajcak, Florida State University).

## **Executive Branch Updates**

### **NSF SBE Advisory Committee Holds Fall Meeting**

On November 2 and 3, the Directorate of Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) Advisory Committee met at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The Advisory Committee meets twice a year to provide oversight and recommendations to the Directorate on its programs, management, and performance, as well as discuss NSF-wide policies. Dr. Kenneth Bollen, Chair of the SBE Advisory Committee, opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions. Dr. Fay Lomax Cook, Assistant Director at NSF for the SBE Directorate, then offered the SBE Directorate update. Several key issues highlighted in Dr. Cook's update included the budget, staffing, and hurricane response activities. With regard to the budget, she noted that the government is currently operating on a continuing resolution (CR) through December 8, but that funding levels for NSF proposed in both the House and Senate appropriations bills greatly exceeded the levels in the president's budget request. She also underscored that no directorate-level allocations were mentioned in any of the appropriations bills, and that language in the committee reports supports the overall importance of investment in NSF. Dr. Cook also noted that recruitment is currently underway to fill several open SBE leadership positions, including her position of Assistant Director, as her term ends next year. An update was also provided on NSF's hurricane related activities. Two dear colleague letters have been issued inviting proposals for research projects related to hurricane preparation or response, and 59 awards have been granted for hurricane related projects. Additionally, the SBE Directorate recently produced a short video illustrating the role of SBE sciences in hurricane preparation and response.

The meeting continued with presentations on the recent National Academies workshop, *Graduate Training in the Behavioral and Social Sciences*; an update on the work of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking; and a discussion on integrating administrative data with traditional survey data. Updates were also provided on each of the three divisions of SBE: the Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences,



the Division of Social and Economic Sciences, and the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, as well as on the “big three” social science surveys – the American National Election Survey, Panel Study of Income Dynamics, and General Social Survey. A substantial portion of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion focused on strategic planning and the “grand challenges” that SBE sciences must consider. Groups of Advisory Committee members discussed the priorities and elements that NSF should consider as it undertakes strategic planning, and presented several grand challenges to the rest of the committee and NSF leadership. Some of the issues that the Advisory Committee identified as being high priorities included: how group diversity influences learning, work, innovation, and creativity; how to redesign the information ecosystem to better serve democracy; developmental inequalities; solutions for dynamics that define the trajectory of the United States and affect the health, prosperity, and welfare of its citizens; and communicating beneficial public-private sector improvements in an age of increasing uncertainty. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Advisory Committee.

## Federal Reports and Requests

### *Reports*

#### **New Reports and Briefs from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation**

Several new publications are available from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

*(1) Informing the Tribal Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) 2.0 Evaluation Design: A Brief Review of the Literature* This [report](#) summarizes findings from a review of the literature on tribal research oversight, approaches to conducting evaluations in American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities, and strategies and models that have been used to implement programs similar to the Tribal Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) 2.0 Program.

*(2) Principles to Guide Research with Tribal Communities: The Tribal HPOG 2.0 Evaluation in Action* This [brief](#) provides guidance based on how the Tribal Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) 2.0 evaluation team applied the findings from the literature review and values from the Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities.

*(3) Evidence on the Long-Term Effects of Home Visiting Programs: Laying the Groundwork for Long-Term*

*Follow-Up in the Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation (MIHOPE)* This [brief](#) summarizes findings from impact studies on several early childhood home visiting models.

*(4) Who Contacts the National Domestic Violence Hotline and loveisrespect?* This [fact sheet](#) provides graphics showing characteristics of people who contacted The National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline) and loveisrespect (LIR), a helpline targeted toward young people.

*(5) Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Programs for Youth: An In-depth Study of Federally Funded Programs* This [report](#) summarizes findings from a study on federally funded Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) programs for youth.

*(6) Understanding the Intersection Between TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance Services: Findings from a Survey of State Refugee Coordinators* This [brief](#) provides an overview of federal cash assistance programs and refugee resettlement models, along with findings from a survey of State Refugee Coordinators (SRC).

*(7) Career Pathways Intermediate Outcomes Study: Plan for Cost-Benefit Analyses* This [report](#) describes a plan for the cost-benefit analyses that will be conducted for several of the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) programs, which provide strategies for increasing employment and self-sufficiency among low-income families.

## **New Reports, Briefs, and Research Summaries from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation**

Several new publications are available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

*(1) Head Start Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness: Trends, Characteristics, and Program Services* This [brief](#) presents data from the 2009 cohort of the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey on characteristics of Head Start children and families that experienced homelessness.

*(2) Predictive Analytics in Child Welfare: An Introduction for Administrators and Policy Makers* This [report](#), targeted to child welfare administrators and policy makers, describes using predictive analytics to improve child welfare practice.

*(3)*

*Predictive Analytics in Child Welfare: An Assessment of Current Efforts, Challenges and Opportunities* This [report](#) summarizes the state of the use of predictive analytics in child welfare.

*(4) Factsheet: Estimates of Child Care Eligibility & Receipt for Fiscal Year 2013* This [factsheet](#) provides descriptive information on child care subsidy eligibility and receipt.

*(5) Exploring Cross-Domain Instability in Families with Children* This [brief](#) summarizes existing family instability research across domains.

## **Federal Funding Opportunities**

This month's FFO highlights two National Institutes of Health funding opportunities inviting research that targets the reduction of health disparities among children. Specific targeted areas of research include bio-behavioral studies that incorporate multiple factors that influence child health disparities such as biological (e.g., genetics, cellular, organ systems), lifestyle factors, environmental (e.g., physical and family environments) social (e.g., peers), economic, institutional, and cultural and family influences; studies that target the specific health promotion needs of children with a known health condition and/or disability; and studies that test, evaluate, translate, and disseminate health promotion, prevention, and interventions conducted in traditional and non-traditional settings. Completed applications are due by February 5, 2018 (R01) and February 16, 2018 (R21). Click [here](#) to read about this and other federal funding opportunities.