Acting on behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA), and in frequent collaboration with other APA offices and outside scientific and advocacy organizations, the APA Science Government Relations Office (GRO) worked to expand funding for psychological research; put psychological scientists in touch with their members of Congress through our Stand for Science district campaign and other means; educated congressional staff members about behavioral and social science research issues; and fought back against attacks on specific grants. This report summarizes our 2016 work. Please contact us with questions or comments as we prepare for another year of psychological science advocacy.

The APA Science GRO, a component of the APA Science Directorate, includes five advocates: Director Geoff Mumford, PhD; Craig Fisher, PsyD; Heather O’Beirne Kelly, PhD; Pat Kobor, MA; and Cynthia Malley, MPA. Read more about us and the issues we cover for APA.

APA Science Government Relations Office Goals

- To increase and protect federal funding for psychological research;
- To strengthen the infrastructure that supports psychological science;
- To educate policymakers using relevant psychological research findings; and
- To increase the ability of scientific psychologists to advocate for their field.
Science Research Funding

The calendar year 2017 dawned with a familiar scenario in place: the federal government operating on temporary funding (via a Continuing Resolution) through April 28, 2017. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees approved bills with significant increases for many agencies funding scientific research, but those increases have not been enacted into law as this report goes to print. Budgets are thus held flat for at least the first quarter of the fiscal year. This disappoints advocates, including APA, which had lobbied for increased research agency budgets (e.g., $2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and $8 billion total for the National Science Foundation (NSF)). The new 115th Congress may yet enact the increases but Congress began consulting with a new Administration on January 20 and new conditions will most certainly apply.

In 2016 APA worked in coalitions of scientists, health providers, advocates and consumers in support of robust science budgets at NIH, NSF, the Departments of Education, Justice, Defense and Veterans Affairs, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and others. Below are examples of activities Science GRO engaged in to influence research funding in general and/or behavioral science funding in particular.

Cancer Moonshot

In 2016, President Obama and Vice President Biden announced a new research initiative to make 10 years’ worth of progress against cancer in 5 years. Despite the many contributions of psychological science to cancer research and treatment, the initial research priorities appeared not to include behavioral research. Pat Kobor led APA’s effort to lobby the Vice President’s Office and submit comments in support of expanding the moonshot research priorities. Several psychologists were then appointed to the Cancer Moonshot Initiative Blue Ribbon Panel’s workgroup on Implementation Sciences, and the subsequent Blue Ribbon report includes a focus on enhancing uptake of preventive vaccines and decreasing treatment side effects, both of which may include psychological research. APA President Susan McDaniel, PhD, and cancer researcher Barbara Andersen, PhD, represented APA at the Moonshot Summit in June and the White House meeting in October. APA has also embarked on a research project with the Ohio State University and a federal contractor, Noetic, to enhance psychosocial health in cancer treatment. Read more about Pat Kobor’s efforts around the Cancer Moonshot Initiative.
Wasteful Research? A Look Beyond the Abstract

As Co-chair of the Coalition to Promote Research (CPR), Pat Kobor worked with coalition partners to organize an exhibition on Capitol Hill in defense of federally funded research that has suffered ill-informed attacks from members of Congress and in the media. The event provided researchers whose grants have been attacked with the opportunity to present their work before Members of Congress and their staff. Three psychologists participated: Fred Muench, PhD of the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research, Kim Phillips, PhD of Trinity University, and Karen Ingersoll, PhD of the University of Virginia. Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona attended the event and spoke personally to presenters, some of whom were targeted in his own past “wastebook” reports. The event was well attended and received press coverage by the Huffington Post.

Rally for Medical Research Funding

APA participated in the Rally for Medical Research with a multi-disciplinary group of advocates, researchers, clinicians and patients who called on policymakers to prioritize funding for the National Institutes of Health. This year Susan Woodhouse, PhD, of Lehigh University, represented APA and discussed her Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)-funded research on parenting behaviors and infant attachment.

Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) Annual Lobby Day

APA Science Pat Kobor and Craig Fisher led groups of participants, including NSF-funded psychologist Todd Gureckis, PhD, of New York University, to Capitol Hill to talk about the importance of behavioral and social science funding.
Protecting DoD Research

Heather O’Beirne Kelly successfully led APA's advocacy efforts to remove language from the most recent defense authorization bill that would have inappropriately narrowed the scope of the Department of Defense's health research portfolio.

President’s FY18 VA Research Budget

Heather O’Beirne Kelly and the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research Coalition (FOVA) Executive Committee met with White House Office of Management & Budget (OMB) examiners in August. FOVA advocates request a meeting annually with the senior OMB staff who draft the President’s Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) research budget, focusing on highlighting intramural research funding and infrastructure needs and understanding the Administration's priorities for the coming fiscal year VA budget request.

Letters to Congress

Science GRO organized multiple coalition letters to Senate and House Appropriations Committees, advocating for funding for psychological science research. Some examples include letters from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Coalition, Friends of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), Friends of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Friends of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), in addition to letters drafted internally with colleagues across APA's government relations offices.

Congressional Testimony

Science GRO collaborated with fellow government relations offices within APA to submit testimony for several appropriations subcommittees, including funding requests for research programs in the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Justice and Veterans Affairs, and the National Science Foundation.
Strengthening the Infrastructure for Psychological Science

APA Science GRO worked with experts in the Science Directorate on legislative and federal agency policy issues related to research with non-human animals and human participants. It monitored the creation or dissolution of branches and offices, strategic plans, peer review systems and grant-funding rules within scientific agencies that manage behavioral research. In addition, with input from APA divisions and governance groups, it nominated psychologists to serve on research policymaking bodies. Through Science GRO, APA has spoken out on key regulatory issues of relevance to psychological science throughout the year. Here are highlights of our 2016 activities:

Nominating Psychologists

Science GRO developed nominations of qualified psychologists for various important planning and advisory bodies in 2016. Two of APA’s nominations yielded appointments this year. Zeeshan Butt, PhD of Northwestern University was appointed to the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Advisory Panel on Assessment of Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment Options, and Robin Mermelstein, PhD, of the University of Illinois was appointed to the Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee. Other successful nominations may be announced in 2017.

Providing Comments to Science Agencies

Working within APA and polling relevant divisions and governance groups, Science GRO coordinated the submission of APA comments to several strategic and programmatic research plans, including those of the National Center for Rehabilitation Research, National Institutes of Health Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities, and the National Science Foundation.

In addition to reviewing agency strategic plans, Science GRO submitted comments on topics for research on Alzheimer’s disease and cognitive function to PCORI; the design of the National Institutes of Health ECHO Program (Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes); the National Institutes of Mental Health request for information: Brief Perspectives on Mental Health; draft CDC guidelines for prescribing opioids for chronic pain; the CDC’s National Health Interview Survey redesign (in collaboration with APA’s Public Interest Directorate Government Relations Office and Center for Workforce Studies); and the CDC Preventing Suicide Technical Package (also in partnership with APA Public Interest GRO).
APA Community Policing Initiative

Heather O’Beirne Kelly contributed to an initiative of APA Interim CEO Cynthia Belar, PhD on community policing by collaborating with Amber Story, PhD, of the APA Science Directorate, on a white paper. The white paper focused on what psychological research tells us about the intersections of policing and race and what research gaps are being/should be addressed by federal science agencies and outside research organizations.

Webinar Series on Substance Use Disorders

Geoff Mumford secured a $15 thousand contract from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)/National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to fund a 5-part video-cast series on addictions to provide graduate students with greater exposure to the etiology, prevention and treatment of substance use disorders. The Education and Science Directorates collaborated with APA Divisions 12, 28 and 50 to develop the series which will be broadcast on consecutive Fridays from mid-February through March 2017. The content and organizational oversight was provided by Bruce Liese, PhD, President of Division 50.

Marijuana Research

Marijuana is highly controlled substance (Schedule 1) with no approved medical use by the FDA. As a result, there are cumbersome bureaucratic barriers to research on its potential therapeutic or deleterious effects. Geoff Mumford led efforts with coalition partners to reduce that regulatory burden through executive branch and legislative actions.

NIH-Funded APA Member Database

Geoff Mumford collaborated with APA's Information Technology systems staff to develop a database of APA-member health science content experts who have recently received NIH funding. The project matches information in the APA member database against the NIH RePORTER database which contains nearly 400,000 NIH grants awarded from 2011-2016.
Educating Policymakers Using Relevant Psychological Research Findings

Throughout 2016, APA Science GRO actively promoted the appearance of psychologists at Capitol Hill events and sought opportunities for psychologists with relevant policy expertise to testify before congressional committees. Independently and in collaboration with scientific coalitions, APA Science GRO organized congressional briefings and receptions featuring psychological scientists and relevant behavioral science research. Here are highlights from the year’s events:

Addressing the Heroin Epidemic

In January 2016, Representatives Frank Guinta (R-NH) and Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH), co-founders and co-chairs of the Bipartisan Task Force to Combat the Heroin Epidemic, invited psychologist Jessica Peirce to provide her perspectives on treating opiate addiction. Pierce, Associate Director of Addiction Treatment Services, Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit at Johns Hopkins University detailed the challenges of managing a 400-patient opioid treatment program as part of the NIDA Clinical Trials Network.

Psychology in Mental Health Research

In light of the new leadership at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Craig Fisher organized a congressional briefing “Future Directions in Mental Health Research: The View from Psychological Science” to highlight key contributions psychological science is making to mental health research. The panel featured three distinguished psychologists, Patricia Areán, PhD, Bill Hetrick, PhD, and Mary Jane Rotheram-Borus, PhD, who have all received research funding from NIMH. The speakers addressed exciting developments in psychological science and outlined promising areas for further mental health research.

Friends of NIAAA Briefings

Geoff Mumford and Cynthia Malley organized an ongoing series of Capitol Hill briefings on behalf of the Friends of the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. In 2016, it presented “Alcohol, Stress, and the Brain: Implications for Treatment and Recovery,” which featured a comprehensive overview of NIAAA’s research portfolio on alcohol use disorders as they
relate to PTSD, by NIAAA Director, George F. Koob, PhD. Additionally, psychologist Rajita Sinha, PhD presented her research on relapse and recovery in patients with alcohol use disorders.

Friends of NIDA Briefings

Geoff Mumford and Cynthia Malley also continued organizing a series of Capitol Hill briefings on behalf of Friends of NIDA. This year, with APA support, Friends of NIDA collaborated with Friends of NIAAA to put on “Brain Development and Our Kid’s Future: Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study.” The briefing provided an overview of the ABCD Study, the largest long-term study of brain development and child health in the United States, and discussed the implications this research will have for the health and well-being of our nation’s children. The discussion was co-led by Nora D. Volkow, MD, Director of NIDA, and George F. Koob, PhD, Director of NIAAA. The panel featured psychologist Sandra Brown, PhD, Director of the ABCD Study Coordinating Center at the University of California, San Diego.

Friends of NICHD Briefings

As Vice Chair of The Friends of NICHD, Craig Fisher and colleagues organized a briefing, “From A to Zika: How what Happens during Pregnancy Influences Child Health.” The briefing explored how the determinants of child health often begin during pregnancy, and presented NICHD-supported research on how maternal influences, including nutrition and infectious diseases like the Zika virus, may affect typical child health and development. Psychologist John Colombo, PhD, of the University of Kansas discussed his research on a cost effective nutritional supplement that resulted in improved pregnancy outcomes and longer term cognitive outcomes for children. Director of the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research and neuropsychologist, Alison Cernich, PhD, presented on prenatal risk factors for cerebral palsy (CP) and research on the prevention of and rehabilitation for CP.

Friends of IES Briefing

As a member of the Friends of IES, Craig Fisher and colleagues hosted a briefing entitled, “Transitioning to Adult Productivity: Supporting Secondary Students with Disabilities in Successful Movement to College and Career.” The briefing highlighted educational and psychological special education research funded by the IES, the research arm of the Department of Education. Among the speakers, the presentation featured psychologist Laurie Powers, PhD, a professor at the Portland State University School of Social Work, who discussed her research on improving transition to adulthood for students in foster care with disabilities through enhancing self-determination skills.

VA Medical Care and Health Resources (FOVA)

As an executive committee member of FOVA, Heather O’Beirne Kelly hosted the coalition's spring Capitol Hill briefing on “Veterans Health Research: A Focus on Women.” FOVA sponsors an annual briefing for members of Congress and their staff to learn more about VA's research program and its impact on Veteran's health and well-being. Opening remarks were provided by Under Secretary of Health, the Honorable David Shulkin, MD, who was recently confirmed as the next Secretary of VA.
Addiction Treatment and Recovery Caucus Briefing

On Science GRO’s recommendation, Congressman Tim Ryan, PhD, Co-Chair of the Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus invited psychologist Hendree Jones, Director of the University of North Carolina's Horizons program, to serve as a panelist at a briefing entitled, “The Impact of Addiction on Infant Mortality.” Dr. Jones provided an informative overview of the issue of opioid use disorder during pregnancy and highlighted her research funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Autonomous Systems Briefing


Annual Coalition for National Science Funding exhibit on Capitol Hill

The APA Science Directorate sponsored an exhibit on the Georgetown University research lab of Sandra Calvert, PhD, in which lab member Kate Brunick, PhD, presented NSF-funded research on digital media and children's learning.

Coalition for Health Funding Public Health Fair

The Coalition for Health Funding held its first ever Public Health Fair on Capitol Hill this year to both advocate for robust, sustained funding for the federal health agencies and demonstrate the value of these investments. Bethany Teachman, PhD, represented APA and discussed her NIMH-funded research on phobia.

Twitter

In 2016, the @APAScience Twitter following grew to over 3,600. Science GRO continues to use Twitter to share interesting research findings and to engage with the psychological science community.
Increasing the Ability of Psychological Scientists to Advocate for Their Discipline

APA Science GRO connects psychologists with opportunities to weigh in on key legislative and regulatory issues through a variety of channels and programs, including in-person meetings with members of Congress and congressional staff. With the goal of enabling psychologists to effectively advocate on behalf of psychological science, Science GRO regularly provides advocacy trainings both in person and via webinar, disseminates relevant policy content and news updates, and provides easy-to-access web-based advocacy resources.

Stand for Science Campaign

This program links psychological scientists with their members of Congress in their home districts:

- Data from the Congressional Management Foundation show that members of Congress find a face-to-face conversation with a constituent to be the most persuasive form of contact. However, getting face time with a member of Congress is not easy, and making the most of that time can be challenging even for the most experienced advocates. The APA Stand for Science District Campaign connects psychological scientists with their members of Congress in their Members’ district offices and provides them with individualized training and support to prepare each psychologist for a successful meeting.

- Here’s how it works: first, Science GRO identifies potential scientist advocates in key districts or states. Next, GRO staff coach those scientists to become effective advocates and provide them with resources they can share during their meetings. Then, GRO arranges meetings with their members of Congress either in their labs or in their member’s local offices. Lastly, GRO follows up with all participants to review how the meeting went and identify next steps.

- Since the Stand for Science Campaign’s inception in 2014, there have been 66 meetings, 31 of which were directly with Members of Congress, and 17 were tours of psychology labs. Lab tours are especially important as many policymakers may never have had that kind of educational experience.
Executive Branch Science Fellowship

Fellows spend one year as special assistants in executive branch science mission agencies working on issues ranging from science policy to research administration. Our 2015-16 fellow Matt Johnson, PhD, spent his fellowship year at the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research arm of the Department of Justice, and had a joint appointment to the White House Social and Behavioral Sciences Team. Our 2016-17 APA Executive Branch Science Fellow, Christin Ogle, PhD, is also placed at NIJ in the Violence and Victimization Research Division of the Office of Research and Evaluation.

Federal Action Network

Science GRO uses this grassroots network to provide psychologists opportunities to lend their voices to advocacy efforts on key legislative issues before Congress. Starting in 2016, APA Science GRO’s policy blogs were shared with advocates on the network as a means of providing relevant, timely policy and news updates. One of the successful advocacy opportunities for Federal Action Network members involved asking both chambers of Congress to pass the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA).

Advocacy Trainings

In addition to the Stand for Science district campaign mentioned above, Science GRO staff conducted numerous advocacy trainings, both in-person and via webinars, for groups including:

- American Psychological Association for Graduate Students Science Committee
- APA Science Student Council
- APA Division 9, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
- APA Division 38, Society for Health Psychology
- APA Division 41, the American Psychology-Law Society
- APA Committee on Aging, in collaboration with APA Public Interest Government Relations Office
- Association of VA Psychologist Leaders
- National Association of Veterans Research and Education Foundations
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology
- University of Virginia Psychology Department

Capitol Hill Days

Science GRO led three groups of psychologists on visits to Capitol Hill, including APA’s Science Student Council, APA’s Committee on Research Ethics (CARE) and the Association of VA Psychologist Leaders.
Your Involvement Is What Makes APA Advocacy Effective

Stay Informed

- Subscribe to Psychological Science Agenda to keep up with news in the science funding agencies and in Congress that matters to you.
- Sign up for the APA Federal Action Network. We make it easy for you to write or call your member of Congress about pressing policy issues, and we only call on you when it’s critically important.
- Follow @apascience on Twitter.

Advocate

- Find out who represents you in Congress: learn about his or her science policy interests. Be aware when your Senators or Representative are in your area for town hall meetings or constituent breakfasts. Show up, ask a question, and bring a current APA briefing sheet.
- Learn how to speak effectively about your research. Prepare a good one-pager about your work (see examples) and use it as a tool when interacting with Congress, the public or the media.
- Blend education about advocacy into your teaching. Need a speaker? APA Science GRO staff often speak to classes in person and over Skype.

Want a more comprehensive advocacy training at a scientific meeting? APA Science GRO staff are always thrilled to add more advocates to the pool. Contact us.
The APA Science Government Relations Office Team

Geoffrey K. Mumford, PhD | Associate Executive Director for Government Relations

Dr. Mumford received his PhD in pharmacology in 1991 from Emory University and completed post-doctoral training in the Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 1993, after which he joined the faculty of the Division of Behavioral Biology in the Department of Psychiatry. In 1996, he accepted a science policy position at APA headquarters in Washington, DC, and in 2000 he was appointed to direct the science policy staff.

He currently serves as the Associate Executive Director for Government Relations. In this capacity, he has served continuously as APAs liaison to the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Craig Fisher, PsyD | Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer

Dr. Fisher advocates for psychological research through his role as a liaison to the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

Before joining APA, Dr. Fisher was an American Association for the Advancement of Science, Science and Technology Policy Fellow at the National Science Foundation, Office of Legislative and Public Affairs where he engaged key stakeholders about NSF-funded basic research, particularly in social and behavioral science.

Previously, Dr. Fisher worked as a licensed clinical psychologist in independent private practice in Northern Virginia and at George Mason University's Counseling and Psychological Services where he specialized in cognitive behavioral therapy for patients with anxiety disorders.

Heather O’Beirne Kelly, PhD | Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer

Heather O’Beirne Kelly, PhD was an undergraduate psychology major at Smith College and worked in non-profit development before receiving her doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Virginia in 1998. Dr. Kelly completed her clinical residency at Children’s Hospital in Washington, DC. Dr. Kelly’s research background focused on the areas of adolescent social development, child sexual abuse, and adolescent dating violence, and as a therapist she worked primarily with children and families.

She has worked in her current position as Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer with the American Psychological Association in its Science Government Relations Office since 1998. In this role, Dr. Kelly advocates for behavioral science on Capitol Hill and in the federal agencies and runs APA's Executive Branch Science Fellowship Program. Within her specific advocacy portfolio are the psychological research programs within the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Dr. Kelly serves as the APA lead on clinical and scientific policy issues affecting military and veteran populations.
**Patricia Clem Kobor, MA | Senior Science Policy Analyst**

Ms. Kobor received her MA in Legislative Affairs in 1987 from the George Washington University. She joined APA in 1990 after seven years on the Washington legislative staff of U.S. Rep. Ben Erdreich (D-AL). On Capitol Hill, Kobor was responsible for a broad range of issues including health and aging.

In the Science Government Relations Office Ms. Kobor is current liaison to many of the NIH institutes and offices, including the National Cancer Institute, National Institute on Aging and Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research. She coordinates APA's legislative work on the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill and co-chairs two coalitions with staff from the Consortium of Social Science Associations: the Coalition to Promote Research and the Coalition for the Advancement of Health Through Behavioral and Social Sciences Research.

**Cynthia Malley, MPA | Science Policy Associate**

Ms. Malley is in her third year with the APA. As the Science Policy Associate, Malley supports the Science Government Relations team with their communication efforts and is involved in meeting planning and administration. Ms. Malley received a Masters of Public Administration with a concentration in Applied Politics from American University School of Public Affairs in May of 2014, and a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from the State University of New York at Geneseo in 2009.