



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

American Psychological Association

Testimony concerning the Fiscal Year 2006 appropriation

for

The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services,  
and Education

Submitted for the written record  
April 1, 2005

The American Psychological Association (APA) is the largest association of psychologists in the world, representing 155,000 members, affiliates and students. APA exists to advance psychology as a science, a profession, and a means of promoting education and human welfare. APA members serve as scientists funded by the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as teachers and professors in our nation's high schools, colleges and universities, and as health professionals who treat patients in public and private clinics and programs. APA encourages the committee to strengthen U.S. investment in a continuum of programs on health promotion, disease prevention and care, ranging from basic research to clinical applications that will improve the health and education of all Americans. We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony for the record.

## **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

### **National Institutes of Health**

The Administration's Fiscal Year 2006 budget proposes an NIH funding increase of 0.5 percent, lower than the biomedical inflation rate. This would not allow NIH to take advantage of many scientific opportunities. The success rate is already falling from one in three grant applications funded, to one in four. APA encourages the Committee to include a six percent funding increase for NIH in this year's legislation.

Funding increases for the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) have been negligible for the past two years, and the Administration's budget continues the trend (the request is \$26.2 million). The Committee has praised OBSSR for making it easier for NIH institutes to cooperate to fund cross-cutting initiatives. OBSSR has been able to leverage substantive funding initiatives with a small budget. However, its ability to do so is eroding. OBSSR is planning trans-NIH programs to fund behavioral and social research on health disparities in minority populations, and on how gene/environment interactions affect health. It would benefit from a six percent increase. APA supports an appropriation of \$ 27.66 million for OBSSR.

Critically important behavioral research is being conducted by most NIH institutes. We can list only a few examples here. Epidemiology studies supported by NIAAA show that alcohol is a drug of choice for youth and that it is associated with a host of consequences in this age group, including death and increased risk of harm and other negative outcomes. Recent data show that 18- to 24-year-olds have the highest prevalence of alcohol dependence of any age group. These and other data make it clear that alcohol has become entrenched in the developmental processes of adolescence, and that the developmental changes of adolescence appear to make this age group particularly vulnerable to alcohol's effects. Research by NIDA and others shows that the human brain does not fully develop until about age 25. Having insight into how the human brain works, and understanding the biological underpinnings of risk taking among

young people will help in developing more effective prevention programs. NIAAA and NIDA are to be commended for pursuing research to understand how to extricate alcohol and other addictive drugs from adolescent development and how to change adolescents' behaviors toward addictive substances.

Psychological research supported by the NICHD is providing critical answers to many questions about childhood development, including how children learn to read and how they can overcome learning disabilities. Additional work is needed to improve our understanding of the role of cognition in learning mathematical and scientific concepts. Additional research is also needed to inform the public health community of how best to modify high-risk behaviors in children and families that contribute to the rising incidence of childhood obesity.

As NIMH implements its reorganization, APA is encouraging the institute to maintain its support for a comprehensive research portfolio that includes funding for a broad array of basic behavioral research and continues to support research on the promotion of mental health and the study of psychological, social, and legal factors that influence behavior. Given the increasing burden of mental disorders on children and adolescents, behavioral interventions are especially needed for children and adolescents with eating disorders, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and the most common forms of depression. Translational research in the behavioral and social sciences is especially needed to address how basic behavioral processes, such as cognition, emotion, motivation, development and social interaction, inform the diagnosis, treatment and delivery of services for mental disorders.

APA remains concerned that basic behavioral research at NIH—that is, research on the mechanisms that influence and underlie behavior, conducted outside a disease context-- is vulnerable to budget pressures and pressures to demonstrate effective interventions. NIH institutes must balance the imperative for translation with the need to continue posing basic questions that will fuel the next generation of interventions. Much basic research is supported at NIH by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, yet NIGMS funds very little basic behavioral research. APA asks that the committee continue to encourage or direct NIGMS, as it has for the past five years, to fill some of the gaps that now appear in NIH support of basic behavioral research and research training.

### **Administration for Children and Families**

***Prevention of child maltreatment.*** Nationwide, an estimated 896,000 children are abused and neglected each year, resulting in an estimated 1,400 child deaths. The negative effects of child maltreatment can persist into adulthood. An increase of \$15 million will enhance prevention activities for child maltreatment by population-based monitoring to capture information about children outside child protective service systems and improve data collection to inform policy, research and public awareness programs. These funds will also advance research to prevent the negative consequences of child maltreatment

and to examine risk and protective factors to further the development and implementation of culturally and linguistically appropriate prevention and intervention approaches.

***Bullying prevention.*** Research indicates that bullying directly affects approximately one in three school children within a school semester. In addition, research confirms that bullying among children poses serious risks for victims and perpetrators and may seriously undermine the climate of schools. APA urges the adoption of research-based comprehensive bullying prevention programs and adequate federal funding to support the implementation of effective, comprehensive bullying prevention programs.

### **Health Resources and Services Administration Bureau of Health Professions**

***Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program:*** Funding in the amount of \$6 million for FY 2006 is requested to continue the Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program, which was established in Fiscal Year 2002. The GPE Program, administered by the Bureau of Health Professions, is the only federal program dedicated solely to psychology education and training.

Funded in FY 2003 at \$4.5 million and flat-funded for FY 2004 and FY 2005, the funds are now obligated to 27 grants on a three year cycle. As a result there will be no new competition this year. Without a modest increase of \$1.5 million there will not be a new competition in FY 2006. The \$6 million request for FY 2006 will enable hundreds of interested universities and training sites (e.g., veterans hospitals, children's hospitals, academic science centers and public health facilities) to apply for a GPE grant to increase the number of psychologists practicing in underserved rural and urban communities.

The GPE Program provides grants to APA accredited doctoral, internship and post-doctoral programs in support of interdisciplinary training of psychology students for the provision of mental and behavioral health services to underserved populations (i.e., older adults, children, chronically ill persons, and victims of abuse and trauma), especially in rural and urban communities. Furthermore, the GPE Program addresses the need for mental health services that was well documented in the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Report (2003): about 1 in 5 American adults (44 million people) experience a mental disorder in a given year and 28% of adults meet the full criteria for a mental or addictive disorder.

### **Substance Abuse, Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services**

***Mental and Behavioral Health Services on Campus Program:*** Funding in the amount of \$5 million for FY 2006 is requested for the newly established Mental

and Behavioral Health Services on Campus Program, which is part of the Garrett-Lee-Smith Memorial Act that provides support for youth suicide early intervention and prevention programs, technical assistance centers for suicide prevention, and mental and behavioral services on campuses. The program also helps identify the best means, strategies and solutions for addressing the mental and behavioral health needs of our college aged youth.

The Mental and Behavioral Health Services on Campus program received \$1.5 million from FY 2005 funds. The requested increased funding for \$5 million in FY 2006 will help ensure that SAMSHA administrators will be able to implement the program in a way that best addresses the needs that exist on college campuses. Academic failure on our college campuses, which is often associated with mental or behavioral problems, not only results in personal loss, but loss in federal investment (student financial assistance), as well. In the most severe cases, unaddressed psychological problems can lead to depression and even suicide – a loss that can never be measured.

***Minority AIDS Initiative.*** The estimated number of AIDS cases from 1999 to 2003 has increased for racial and ethnic minorities, including African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Pacific/Islanders and American Indians/Alaska Natives. Many persons with HIV/AIDS have mental and/or substance abuse disorders. While treatment can enhance overall health and well-being, racial and ethnic minorities have less access to, and lower utilization of, mental health and substance abuse services. Accordingly, APA recommends an additional \$5 million, for a total of \$15 million, for the Minority AIDS Initiative to provide culturally competent and accessible mental health and substance abuse services to persons of color living with HIV/AIDS.

### **Center for Substance Abuse Prevention**

***Rapid HIV Testing.*** Each year, 25 to 30 percent of HIV-infected people who come to public clinics for HIV testing do not return a week later to receive their test results. With the rapid HIV test, results are available in about 20 minutes. Greater availability of this test can increase overall HIV testing and reduce the number of people -- an estimated 225,000 Americans -- who are unaware of their HIV infection. APA strongly supports the Rapid HIV Testing Initiative to train mental health and substance abuse service providers on rapid HIV testing and prevention counseling and urges an additional \$4.8 million, for a total of \$9.6 million, for Fiscal Year 2006. Mental health treatment services for individuals testing positive should also be provided as a critical component of rapid HIV testing.

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

#### **National Center for Injury Prevention and Control**

***Suicide prevention.*** An increase of \$5 million over the FY 2005 appropriation for suicide prevention activities will allow CDC to support the evaluation of suicide prevention planning, programs, and communication efforts to change knowledge and attitudes and to reduce suicidal behavior. These evaluation efforts will support communities to identify promising and effective suicide prevention strategies that follow the public health model and build community resilience.

***National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).*** An increase of \$10 million over the FY 2005 appropriation for the NVDRS will allow approximately 20 additional states to be funded to gather and share state-level data about violent deaths. This state-based system collects data from medical examiners, coroners, police, crime labs, and death certificates to understand the circumstances surrounding violent deaths. The information can be used to develop, inform, and evaluate violence prevention programs.

## **National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)**

APA recommends an overall increase of \$40 million over the FY 2005 appropriation for NIOSH. As the only federal agency for occupational safety and health research and prevention, NIOSH provides national and international leadership to prevent work-related illness, injury, and death by gathering information, conducting scientific research, and translating the knowledge gained into products and services.

## **U.S. Department of Education**

### **Institute for Education Sciences**

Support for research is particularly critical at the Institute of Education Sciences as it seeks to translate scientifically based research findings into classroom practice. To support the highest quality cognitive, developmental, and educational science, we would encourage IES to hold a field-initiated studies competition in the next fiscal year to encourage innovative research driven by scientific opportunities.

APA appreciates the opportunity to present appropriations recommendations for the written record, and encourages members of the Committee to contact our Public Policy Office at (202) 336-6062 with questions or concerns about this statement.