



FROM KATHERINE B. MCGUIRE, APA CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER

For the Week of May 27, 2019

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While Congress was out for recess this week, APA's advocacy staff worked to increase access to behavioral health care in schools, oppose discrimination in health care, expand our advocacy work into artificial intelligence, protect behavioral research and much more. Congress is back in session next week with a full agenda before they recess the week of July 1.

APA action this week included:

Endorsing A Bill to Improve Mental Health Access in Schools

APA wrote a [letter](#) in support of [S. 1642](#), which would establish program between universities and school systems to recruit and retain mental and behavioral health professionals who can provide services to students. Known as the Increasing Access to Mental Health in Schools Act, sponsored by Senator Jon Tester (D-MT), the bill emphasizes the need outlined in APA's *Stress in America: Generation Z* report, that today's students are more likely than previous generations to report and seek help for poor mental health. The bill would award 5-year grants to support hiring school-based providers and train graduate students from partnering institutions to gain coursework credit in exchange for their commitment to service upon graduation.

For more information, contact Karen Studwell at kstudwell@apa.org.

Applauding Legislation Calling for Artificial Intelligence Investment and Oversight

APA sent a [letter](#) to Sens. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), Robert Portman (R-Ohio), and Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) in support of their legislation, the [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Initiative Act](#). APA applauded the

bill's proposal for creation of a federal AI oversight structures and advisory committees. APA was also pleased that the bill calls for substantial federal investment over the next five years in the federal agencies working on research, development, and education on AI. To help inform the legislation as it advances, APA forwarded its previous [comments](#) on the update to the 2016 National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan. These comments address the role that psychological science could play in developing effective methods of human-AI collaboration; understanding and addressing ethical, legal and societal implications of AI; ensuring the safety and security of AI systems; and contributing to the better understanding of the national AI workforce needs.

For more information, please contact Craig Fisher, PsyD, at cfisher@apa.org.

Requesting NIH to Disclose the Disciplinary Training of its Grantees

To better track how psychological science is funded at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), APA submitted comments to NIH in response to a [Request for Information](#) on enhanced access to NIH administrative data to suggest the importance of making the training discipline of grantees available. Currently the only way to get that information is to search for a given Principal Investigator's website and derive the information from a bio-sketch or on-line curriculum vitae. APA made the case that it is of interest to professional associations to know what kind of research members of their fields are conducting as it may suggest trends that would inform training programs. In addition, APA made the point that it should also be of interest to the NIH as it would suggest which scientific disciplines provide broad support for their mission-oriented research as well as how those disciplines evolve and interact.

As one example, a search of "active awards" by academic department using psychology as the department category showed that [over 1,750 awards](#) had been granted to psychology departments through 24 of the 27 Institutes and Centers at NIH. APA suggested it would be revealing for NIH to examine the types of research that psychologists are doing in so many different areas as that would speak to the breadth of psychological science as it applies to the NIH mission.

For more information, please contact, Geoff Mumford, PhD, at gmumford@apa.org.

Defending Research with Non-Human Animals

APA contributed to two letters opposing efforts to curtail research with non-human animals. As a member of the Friends of the VA, APA co-signed a [letter](#) to the leadership of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs urging them to reject language in the House version of the FY 2020 bill that would stop VA research with canines that has led to advances in treatments for vets. In addition, the STAR coalition (Supporting Truth about Animal Research) led by APA, sent a [letter](#) to NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, urging him not to accede to language in the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill for FY 2020 that would prioritize research on unproven alternatives to animal models.

For more information, please contact Pat Kobor at pkobor@apa.org.

Fighting Against Efforts to Weaken Nondiscrimination Protections in Health Care

APA issued a [press statement](#) in response to a proposed federal rule, released by the Department of

Health and Human Services that would weaken the Affordable Care Act's non-discrimination protections for vulnerable populations. The proposed rule would make it easier for health-care providers who receive federal funding to deny coverage or services to several groups of people including sexual and gender minorities, women and individuals with limited English language. Click [here](#) to read the proposed regulation and information on submitting comments.

For more information, please contact Leo Rennie at lrennie@apa.org.

Save the Date! APA's Annual Education Advocacy Breakfast at Convention

APA's Annual Education Advocacy Breakfast will be held on Saturday, Aug. 10, 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. at the Marriott Marquis in Grand Lakes Ballroom E. Please join us for breakfast to connect with the Board of Educational Affairs, colleagues from the education and training community, and APA leaders committed to increasing the impact of our advocacy efforts for psychology. Please [RSVP](#) by Tuesday, June 25.

For more information, please contact Rosie Sheehan at rsheehan@apa.org.