



FEDERAL ACTION NETWORK  
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 2018

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### APA Coalition Work Targets Gun Violence and Opioids

APA actively participates in numerous coalitions with other scientific and professional organizations to pursue shared advocacy goals. Below is a sample of such recent activity.

#### Groups Urge Policymakers to Find Bipartisan Solution to Gun Violence

APA joined 75 national medical, health, public health, and research organizations in a letter to [House](#) and [Senate](#) policymakers urging bipartisan “comprehensive legislative solutions to firearm-related injuries and fatalities.”

The letter specifically expresses the critical need to “address gun violence as the significant public health threat that it is so that we can enact policies that significantly reduce firearm-related morbidity and mortality...Federal policy should address gun violence with the same dedication applied to other successful public health initiatives over the past 25 years, such as immunizations, public sanitation, and motor vehicle safety.” It also emphasizes the need to use “research and evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies” to reduce gun-related injury and mortality.

#### APA Supports Call to Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the U.S.

APA also joined the Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence organizations in their [Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America](#). The Interdisciplinary Group consists of prominent experts in violence prevention.

## Coalition Spells Out Spending Priorities for Children Impacted by the Opioid Crisis

APA, a member of the National Child Abuse Coalition, joined in sending an organizational sign-on letter to the leadership of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education Subcommittees, regarding spending priorities for children impacted by the opioid crisis.

Specifically, the letter urges Congress to “dedicate a portion” of the \$6 billion provided by the recently passed Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 to address “the needs of children who have been uniquely impacted by the opioid crisis.” The recommendations include:

1. Ensuring meaningful implementation of Plan of Safe Care requirements within *the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act*: FY 2018/FY 2019 Appropriations Request – \$120 million per year
2. Investing in substance use, parenting programs, and mental health prevention and treatment services to prevent children from entering foster care: FY 2018/FY 2019 Appropriations Request – add \$125 million per year
3. Supporting kinship caregivers: FY 2018/FY 2019 Appropriations Request – \$15 million per year

## Administration Releases FY 2019 Budget; Flat-Funds NIH and NSF, Cuts Workforce Training Programs

The Trump Administration released its fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget on February 12 following the February 9 passage of a two-year budget deal, the [FY 2018 Continuing Resolution \(CR\) Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018](#) (H.R. 1892). The CR funds the government through March 23. It raised both the defense and non-defense discretionary (NDD) sequestration caps increasing the funding available in FY 2018 and FY 2019. The Administration attempted to allocate the increased funding to specific programs per the [addendum](#) accompanying its FY 2019 budget.

While the Administration’s budget would essentially flat-fund the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), it would also cut the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) budget for workforce training programs (see [Science Blog](#)). As in FY 2018, the Trump budget continues to propose the elimination of the Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program, the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Program, and the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program. Similarly, it would also eliminate the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Minority Fellowship Programs and the Department of Education’s Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

At the same time, the FY 2019 budget would target additional resources to improve veteran’s health care and fund scientific research. It calls for \$10 billion in new resources across the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to address the opioid epidemic and serious mental illness. As noted by APA’s CEO Arthur Evans, Jr., PhD, in his [statement](#) on the budget’s release, the Administration’s overall budget would “decimate critical education, justice, and behavioral health workforce programs if enacted.” [Read More](#)

## President's FY 2019 Budget Would Eliminate Minority Fellowship Program; APA Leads MFP Coalition

The President's FY 2019 budget request would zero out the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Minority Fellowship Program (MFP). This program is a highly successful federally-funded training program designed to support ethnic and racial minority researchers and service providers. Established in 1974, MFP is committed to increasing the number of ethnic minority professionals in the field and advancing our understanding of the life experiences of ethnic minority communities.

APA recently started a coalition made up of other organizations that also receive support and manage their respective programs. The coalition's purpose is to advocate for funding for the [Minority Fellowship Program](#). Member organizations include the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, National Board of Certified Counselors, Council on Social Work Education, the American Psychiatric Association, among others.

On February 14, the coalition met with the White House Office of Management and Budget to discuss funding for the program. It is also actively advocating for the program with Congress. The coalition will make visits on Capitol Hill along with implementing other planned advocacy strategies. For any questions regarding the program or to receive more information about what you can do to help, contact Serena Dávila at [sdavila@apa.org](mailto:sdavila@apa.org).

## APA Submits Recommendations on HEA Reauthorization to Senate HELP Committee

On February 23, APA submitted [recommendations](#) in response to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions' (HELP) request for "comments or suggestions for the Committee's consideration" as it works to reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965.

Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) recently announced that the Committee would like to develop HEA legislation by early spring, reportedly as soon as March. He has repeatedly indicated he would like the Senate bill to be bipartisan. The House's bill, *Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act*, H.R. 4508, passed the Education and the Workforce Committee by a partisan vote of 23-17. While Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) have a history of working in a bipartisan manner, Senator Murray acknowledges they have "some serious tough issues to work through."

The Committee has held several HEA reauthorization-related [hearings: improving affordability, accountability and risk to taxpayers, access and innovation, financial aid simplification and transparency, and simplification of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#).

## APA Members Highlighted in Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program Op-Ed Campaign

Protecting the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program during Congress' reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) is one of [APA's 2018 legislative priorities](#). APA is collecting testimonials of PSLF recipients to share with Members of Congress. APA is appreciative of all who have already shared the importance of the PSLF Program to their education and careers.

To date, two of those stories have been converted to op-eds and have run in the authors' hometown papers. In January an op-ed by **Tiffany N. Willis** ran in the [Kansas City Star](#). Willis is a first-generation college graduate, a neonatal psychologist at Children's Mercy and an assistant professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She shared the importance of PSLF to her career working with those who have experienced trauma. **Jennifer M. Flaherty** is a clinical neuropsychologist at Eastern Virginia Medical School who "assess[es] children and adolescents ages 6 and up, and some young adults, who have developmental disorders." Her testimonial of the PSLF Program's value to communities is the latest op-ed to run in her local newspaper, the [Virginian-Pilot](#). APA encourages all PSLF recipients to join Flaherty and Willis and share your [story](#)!

As you may be aware, APA issued an Action Alert encouraging everyone to [Take Action](#) to show their support for federal financial aid programs as Congress works to reauthorize the Higher Education Act of 1965. If you have not done so, now is the time to let your Representative and Senators know that programs like PSLF, Grad PLUS, and Federal Work Study (FWS) are essential to graduate students with financial need and ultimately to the future strength of our nation!

## APA Member Promotes Behavioral Health in Congressional Briefing Exploring Men's Mental Health

Wizdom Powell, PhD, MPH, MS, represented the APA at a January 30 briefing on mental health among males across the lifespan. Sponsored by the [Men's Health Network](#), in collaboration with the Congressional Men's Health Caucus, the briefing – *Men's and Boy's Mental Health Issues: Gateways to Opioid and Drug Abuse?* – examined causes and solutions for anxiety, depression, and suicide. It also considered whether common behavioral conditions are gateways to opioid and drug abuse.

Powell outlined policy and community-level recommendations: expanding programs that can assist boys and men who are re-entering communities from prison or jails, expanding behavioral health care access and coverage for boys and men, and providing training to psychologists and other healthcare providers working with racial, ethnic, and sexual minority males. Powell is Director of the Health Disparities Institute and Associate Professor of Psychiatry at UConn Health and Chair of the APA Working Group on Health Disparities in Boys and Men. Additional information regarding Dr. Powell's presentation is available at the following links: [Full briefing](#), [Presentation video](#), and [PowerPoint slides](#).

## Federal Funding Opportunities

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Research Grants for Preventing Violence and Violence Related Injury \(R01\)](#)

### Health Resources & Services Administration

- [Grants and Cooperative Agreements](#)

### National Institutes of Health

- [Research Training and Career Development Programs](#)
- [Grants and Funding](#)

### National Science Foundation

- [Funding Opportunities](#)
- [NSF Research Traineeship \(NRT\) program](#)

### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

- [Grant Announcements and Awards](#)

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