APA Weighs in on FY 2020 Congressional Appropriations

Each year APA submits testimony to House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees, outlining funding requests for the coming fiscal year (FY). These statements become part of the subcommittee record and are used as references by the subcommittees as they draft appropriations bills. Typically limited to four or five pages by subcommittee rules, these statements reflect a unified APA advocacy mission. Below are sample quotes from the APA appropriations statements submitted during April.

**House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations FY 2020** — “…APA recommends that NIH expand its Loan Repayment Program beyond the five currently eligible extramural programmatic areas to include mission-oriented pain and addiction research. The opioid crisis requires that NIH emphasize the training of scientists in these inextricably linked research domains as well as spotlight non-human animal pain and addiction research.”

**House Commerce-Justice Appropriations FY 2020** — “…APA strongly supports continued efforts in Congress to reform the federal criminal justice system… FY 2020 appropriations for DOJ [Department of Justice] represent another avenue to reduce the burden of crime and incarceration on families and communities. APA urges the Committee to adopt a reform-minded approach in appropriations for the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and Office of Justice Programs (OJP).”
**House Military Construction-VA Appropriations FY 2020** — “… APA urges Congress to take specific actions outlined below to enhance access, continuity, and integration of mental health care in VA; expand suicide prevention initiatives; track and improve the quality of non-VA care; and address recruitment, retention, and safety challenges for VA psychologists.”

**House Defense Appropriations FY 2020** — “…APA’s FY2020 testimony focuses on 1) supporting important behavioral and social sciences research within DoD with a minimum increase of 5.9% over current funding; 2) reversing Army cuts to the Minerva Research Initiative;“

**Senate Defense Appropriations FY 2020** — “…APA’s FY2020 testimony focuses on... 3) fully funding the Defense Health Agency as it consolidates military treatment facilities, restoring planned elimination of medical billets, and providing new funds for a pilot, predictive analytics REACH-MIL suicide prevention program coordinated by the Defense Suicide Prevention Office; 4) addressing ongoing TRICARE contractor issues; and 5) funding DoD transition research and programming.”

**APA’s Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology Holds Capitol Hill Day**

On April 12, participants in APA’s Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology (LIWP) gathered to take part in the annual LIWP Capitol Hill Day. This year the advocacy topic focused on Campus Sexual Assault, an issue closely aligned with recent APA activities. Participants provided Senate offices with APA’s recently passed Council Resolution on Campus Sexual Assault and APA’s comments on the Department of Education’s proposed changes to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Following training by APA government relations staff, 33 LIWP participants made 28 visits with Senate offices across 18 states. During their meetings, they urged Senators to commit to addressing the issue of campus sexual assault and campus climate in the Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization as well as ensure there is an evidence base for policies adopted by campuses. The LIWP participants also requested an expansion of
campus sexual assault prevention and education programs, as included in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 (H.R. 1585) recently passed by the House.

Engagement in federal advocacy is a core competency of the Leadership Institute’s annual programming which prepares, supports, and empowers women psychologists as leaders to promote positive changes in institutional, organizational, and practice settings, as well as APA governance.

Energized from their experience many LIWP participants are planning to continue their advocacy efforts by scheduling in-district visits with House offices to discuss HEA reauthorization.

25th Annual CNSF Exhibition – Dr. Jing Chen: The Importance of Human Factors Psychology

APA participated in the 25th Annual Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) Exhibition and Reception on April 30th. This year’s event, “Building the Future: Federal Investments in Science, Engineering, and Education” showcased a wide range of research across all areas of science, made possible by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Psychologist, Dr. Jing Chen, Old Dominion University (ODU), represented APA. Chen presented her work on how human factors psychology contributes to safe autonomous driving. Dr. Chen’s research investigates the fundamental principles of human performance and decision-making and applies these principles to cybersecurity and human-automation interaction problems. For the CNSF exhibition, she highlighted several aspects of this work including factors that affect human trust in automation systems, how to design and communicate effective risk warnings for drivers, and how drivers respond to autonomous vehicle cyberattacks.

Dr. Chen joined 34 exhibitors at the CNSF event representing professional organizations, scientific coalitions, and universities. She spoke with many of those in attendance who stopped by to learn about human factors psychology and autonomous driving including Rep. Jack Bergman (R-MI), and Dr. Arthur “Skip” Lupia and Dr.
Marc Sebrechts of NSF’s Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate, as well as congressional staffers, NSF representatives, and government relations professionals.

Earlier in the day, Dr. Chen and APA staff met with the offices of Virginia Members of Congress including Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA), Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA), Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), and Rep. Elaine Luria (D-VA). She described her research as well as her ODU Human-Automation Collaboration (HAC) Laboratory (aka the HAC Lab).

The Congressional outreach provided an important opportunity to thank Members of Congress for supporting increases in NSF funding in fiscal year (FY) 2019, ask them to support NSF receiving at least $9 billion in its FY 2020 appropriations legislation, and to support the enactment of a two-year bipartisan budget agreement that increases the spending caps for discretionary programs such as those at NSF.

**Reps. Katko and Napolitano Reintroduce Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act**

Reps. John Katko (D-NY) and Grace Napolitano (D-CA) issued a press release for the reintroduction of the Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act of 2019 (H.R. 2431), which included a quote from APA CEO Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD among the two other leading national organizations working to advance the bill this Congress. The legislation aims to address the nation’s dire shortage of mental health professionals, particularly in rural and underserved areas, through a loan repayment program.

“The American Psychological Association commends Reps. Katko and Napolitano for introducing this critically needed legislation to help expand access to mental health services for the 115.4 million Americans living in geographical areas without adequate access to mental health care. Additional federal support for behavioral health workforce training programs is needed to meet the growing demand for psychologists in the United States, which is expected to increase significantly by 2030. This legislation represents a significant step by providing incentives for highly qualified behavioral health providers to work in communities where services are most needed,” said Evans.

Reps. Katko and Napolitano serve as co-chairs of the Congressional Mental Health Caucus.

**Oklahoma State University's Psych Students Advocate to Preserve Public Service Loan Forgiveness**

Psychologist and Board of Educational Affairs Member Melanie Lantz, PhD, Assistant Professor and Director of Doctoral Training at Oklahoma State University, coordinated with the APA education advocacy staff to provide an advocacy training webinar for her graduate students. In April, she arranged a meeting with Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK) in his district office.

During their visit, the students’ requested Rep. Lucas’ support to preserve and expand the Public Service Loan
Forgiveness (PSLF) Program during Congress’s reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. They also shared data on student loan debt in professional psychology as well as the unique mental health needs in Oklahoma, particularly for Veterans and farmers. The students further highlighted their personal stories of wanting to work in underserved communities but needing to pay student loans, which creates barriers for the psychology workforce as well as recruiting and retention challenges for organizations that are providing behavioral health services.

**APA Expresses Support; Submits Testimony on Behalf of the Equality Act**

On April 8, APA staff and expert members held a phone meeting with the senior staff at the Office of Management and Budget and Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Office of Civil Rights, reiterating concerns on the near-final conscience clause rule. The rule is intended to expand the ability of health care providers to refuse to perform services or research activities to which they object for religious, moral, ethical, or other reasons.

APA reiterated its earlier message that while the association strongly believes that people should not be discriminated against because of their religious beliefs or moral convictions, the framework protecting religious- and conscience-based exemptions enshrined in current law. Further expansion is not needed. APA remains concerned that the rule could be used to justify discrimination, and urges HHS to prioritize patient welfare, as explained in APA’s Ethics Code (psychologists may not practice “unfair discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law”).

On April 22, APA submitted testimony to the House Committee on Education and Labor Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services on the Equality Act (H.R. 5). The Equality Act, introduced by Representative David Cicilline (D-RI), would amend existing civil rights law to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity) at work, in places of public accommodation, housing, credit, education, jury service, and in programs and facilities that receive federal funding.

APA emphasized that discriminatory legislation contributes to social environments that are stressful and hostile to minority individuals, contributing to multiple health disparities for sexual and gender minorities as well as increased rates of mental and physical health disorders. Conversely, non-discrimination legislation protecting sexual and gender minorities is associated with better mental health, fewer medical care visits, and reduced healthcare costs.

The Subcommittee marked up the bill on May 1st. The House is expected to consider the marked-up bill on the House floor the week of May 13th.

**APA and Coalition Advocacy Activities**

APA actively participates in numerous coalitions with other scientific and professional organizations to pursue shared advocacy goals. Below are the letters APA initiated or signed on to as part of a coalition.

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**AMA Federal Action Network Legislative Update**

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APA supports immigration legislation helping Dreamers -- On April 23rd, APA CEO Dr. Arthur C. Evans, Jr., in a letter to House and Senate leadership expressed support for policies like those advanced in both H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019 and S. 874, the Dream Act of 2019. The letter addressed what the research shows regarding immigrants who fear deportation; keeping families together; and Dreamers’ current experiences.

APA wrote a letter of support for Senator Bob Casey’s (D-PA) Higher Education Mental Health Act of 2019 (S.1204) which, if enacted, will create a national commission to study mental health concerns within the context of student retention and completion of post-secondary education. APA praised the legislation’s efforts to improve comprehensive mental and behavioral health services for our nation’s undergraduate and graduate students and encouraged these efforts to be coordinated with other relevant legislation recently adopted by Congress.

APA’s Letter to Senator Tina Smith (D-MN) in Support of S. 1122 expresses APA’s strong support for the Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2019. The bill amends the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend projects relating to children and to provide access to school-based comprehensive mental health programs. APA previously sent endorsement letters to Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA) and Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY) supporting the House companion legislation.

APA joined a coalition of 67 organizations in sending a letter to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) addressing its most recent behavioral health workforce projections. The coalition encouraged HRSA to devote much-needed attention to improving workforce estimates for behavioral health professionals caring for children, adolescents, and young adults. APA shared the letter with key Congressional committees.

APA signs on to letters addressing criminal justice funding in FY2020 – In April, APA joined organizations representing a broad cross-section of disciplines in supporting evidence-based criminal justice programming at the Federal, Tribal, State, and Local levels by signing onto two letters addressed to House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies leadership. The letters urged the subcommittees to protect funding for key programs within the Office of Justice Programs, the Office of Violence Against Women, the COPS Office, and to also restore funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program. The Byrne program has seen cuts in recent years, even as criminal justice systems are increasingly called upon to address untreated mental illness and substance use disorders in the populations they serve.

APA and its mental health coalition partners endorsed the Protecting Pre-Existing Conditions and Making Health Care Affordable Act of 2019, a bill that works to ensure higher quality health coverage at lower costs. The bill aims to protect vulnerable patient populations with mental health and substance use disorders by ensuring health insurance coverage for pre-existing conditions and comprehensive coverage for the Essential Health Benefits.

ICYMI: News You Can Use

Webinar - Public Service Loan Forgiveness: How You Get It, and Why We’re Fighting to Preserve It

The APA Office of Early Career and Graduate Student Affairs within the Education Directorate sponsored a webinar to discuss the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF). A non-captioned recording link to the PSLF webinar is available here. Along with the webinar slides and Hill Visits Talking Points for PSLF.
LGBTQ Asylum Seekers: How Clinicians Can Help is a new APA resource that considers the ways in which psychologists can help sexual and gender minority asylum seekers cope with trauma and navigate complex systems. It further distinguishes between assessment vs. therapeutic and advocacy roles. LGBTQ Asylum Seekers discusses why LGBTQ people seek asylum, the additional vulnerability of transgender asylees, and sources of resiliency. The Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, with input from APA’s Interdivisional Refugee Health Resource Network and the APA Immigration Working Group, developed the resource.

Federal Funding and Other Resources

Census Bureau
- 2019 Webinar Series: Free Online Training on How to Access and Use our Statistics

Department of Education
- Grants and Funding

Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- Funding & Grants
- Special Emphasis Notice (SEN): AHRQ Announces Interest in Health Services Research to Address the Opioids Crisis

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Notice of Funding Opportunity

Health Resources & Services Administration
- Grants and Cooperative Agreements
- Faculty Loan Repayment Program
- NHSC Scholarship Program
- Apply to Become a National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Site

Office of Minority Health
- Youth Engagement in Sports: Collaboration to Improve Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition (YES Initiative)

National Institutes of Health
- Grants and Funding
- Summer Research Education Experience Program
- K01 - NINDS Faculty Development Award to Promote Diversity in Neuroscience Research
- NIH Intervention Research to Improve Native American Health
- Predoctoral Training in Advanced Data Analytics for Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (BSSR) - Institutional Research Training Program [T32]
- NIH Loan Repayment
- Research Training and Career Development Programs
- NIMH Programs to Enhance Workforce Diversity
- Office of Disease Prevention – How to Apply for Funding

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Grant Announcements and Awards
National Science Foundation

- Funding Opportunities
- Dear Colleague Letter: NSF Convergence Accelerator Pilot (NSF C-Accel)
- Science and Technology Centers: Integrative Partnerships
- Small Business Technology Transfer Program Phase I (STTR)
- Small Business Innovation Research Program Phase I (SBIR)
- Dear Colleague Letter: Fundamental Discipline-Based Education Research (DBER) Focused on Undergraduate and Graduate STEM Education within the EHR Core Research (ECR) Program
- Harnessing the Data Revolution (HDR): Institutes for Data-Intensive Research in Science and Engineering - Frameworks (I-DIRSE-FW)
- Harnessing the Data Revolution (HDR): Transdisciplinary Research in Principles of Data Science Phase I
- Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)
- EHR Core Research (ECR): STEM Learning and Learning Environments, Broadening Participation, and Workforce Development (NSF 19-508)
- Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) (NSF 17-537)

Department of Justice

- DOJ Opioid Affected Youth Initiative

National Institute of Justice

- Current Funding Opportunities
- Investigator-Initiated Research and Evaluation on Firearms Violence
- Graduate Research Fellowship in the Social and Behavioral Sciences

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- Funding Opportunities

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

- Funding Opportunity

Please let us know if you apply or received funding: GRO@apa.org.