



ASN Health and Nutrition Public Policy Newsletter July 3, 2007

CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

Farm Bill to be Considered Later this Month

Both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees are expected to consider the Farm Bill in July. Originally scheduled for late June, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) has scheduled a full Committee markup for July 17-19. The delay pushes the House floor debate of this issue back to late July, but the time table could slip even further. Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) has not yet announced the dates for consideration, though sources say it likely will be the third or fourth week of the month.

Chairman Peterson has announced he will bring two bills to the full Committee for consideration. The first would extend the 2002 Farm Bill and maintain status quo; and the second would allocate the \$20 billion deficit neutral reserve fund set aside for various farm programs under the FY2008 budget resolution. However, in order to accomplish this, offsets must be found. This is something that no one on the committee has been able to accomplish thus far. So far, subcommittees have collectively recommended \$13 billion in new spending, which is still well within the allotted \$20 billion reserve fund; however, in actuality, few believe the reserve fund will materialize. One potential source of additional funds—reductions in commodity price supports—was nixed unanimously by the General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee. During subcommittee markups, many amendments were withdrawn with the expectation of reintroducing these issues during the full committee markup, until the situation with additional reserve funds was better understood.

Anti-hunger, conservation, environment, rural development, trade, taxpayer and other groups are lining up to oppose a Farm Bill that maintains the status quo, and groups already receiving commodity subsidies are digging in their heels in support of the current program.

ASN remains concerned about the Research title of the Farm Bill being drafted in the House, and sources on Capitol Hill tell ASN that changes will be made to the version approved by the subcommittee, and largely disappointing to research stakeholders, before the full Committee mark up. Including among these changes may be language in support of national nutrition monitoring activities.

ASN joined other organizations in sending [a letter to Chairman Peterson](#) urging him to consider proposals, like the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, to rebalance the portfolio of USDA Research so that the sizable gap between food, nutrition and agriculture research and all other forms of federal research investments is narrowed.

On the Senate side, the Nutrition and Research titles have been released to Senate staff, but have not been made publicly available.

Senate Committee Marks Up Appropriations for Labor-HHS-Education

On June 21, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the FY2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS-Ed) Appropriations Bill. The bill, which had been approved by the Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Subcommittee on June 19 provides \$29.9 billion (a \$1 billion increase or a 3.5 percent increase over FY2007) for NIH.

However the Senate subcommittee followed the same approach as the House subcommittee to increase the

amount of the transfer from NIH to the Global HIV/AIDS fund from \$99 million in FY2007 to \$300 million in for FY2008. As a result, the actual increase for NIH programs in FY2008 is \$799 million (2.8 percent), compared to \$549 million (1.9 percent) in the House bill. Both the House and Senate bills fall short of the projected 3.7 percent increase in the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI) for FY 2008.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) appropriations fared better, receiving a total of \$6 billion, an increase of \$223.841 million over FY 2007 levels. The CDC's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity received a \$3 million increase, from \$41.25 million to \$44.25 million. Also within CDC's budget in the Senate bill, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) would receive \$117 million; an \$8 million increase over FY 2007. In the Senate committee's report language, the Committee encourages NCHS to continue making data accessible to the public as soon as possible and notes that it has provided enough funding to continue uninterrupted collection of vital statistics in FY 2008.

The schedule for Senate floor consideration of the bill is uncertain. The House Appropriations Committee is tentatively scheduled to consider its bill sometime during the week of July 9. Neither chamber has taken up the Department of Agriculture appropriations bills yet.

View the status of appropriations bills [here](#).

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Holds First Public Meeting

On June 28 -29, the newly appointed Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee (PAGAC) met in Washington to begin developing the first-ever Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. The PAGAC is charged with providing guidance to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) on the science surrounding the benefits and risks associated with physical activity, which will be translated into specific public health recommendations for Americans.

The Advisory Committee will review the scientific evidence and literature, identify evidence to develop the recommendations, and prepare a comprehensive report by February 2008 to the Secretary. The report will explain the scientific background and rationale for the Physical Activity Guidelines, which have a target release date of October 2008. William Haskell, Ph.D., professor of medicine at the Stanford University School of Medicine and Chair of the Committee explained that the Physical Activity Guidelines should complement the 2005 Dietary Guidelines and, as the Dietary Guidelines did, will include a policy document and consumer piece. The next meetings of the committee, which will be open for public comment, will be held in November 2007 and February 2008.

The Advisory Committee Members include:

- Rod K. Dishman, Ph.D., University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.
- William Haskell, Ph.D., Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford, Calif.
- Edward Howley, Ph.D., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn.
- Wendy Kohrt, Ph.D., University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center, Denver, Colo.
- William Kraus, M.D., Duke University School of Medicine, Durham, N.C.
- I-Min Lee, M.D., Sc.D., Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, Mass.
- Anne McTiernan, M.D., Ph.D., Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, Wash
- Miriam Nelson, Ph.D., Tufts University, Boston, Mass.
- Russell Pate, Ph.D., University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.
- Kenneth Powell, M.D., M.P.H., public health and epidemiologic consultant, Atlanta, Ga.
- Judith Regensteiner, Ph.D., University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Denver, Colo.
- James Rimmer, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL
- Antronette Yancey, M.D., M.P.H., University of California, Los Angeles School of Public Health, Los Angeles, Calif.

The PAGAC process is being modeled after that which was followed by the 2005 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. The forthcoming physical activity guidelines are expected to complement the 2005 and future 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

For additional information on the Advisory Committee members, please visit the [DHHS Press Room](#). For additional information, please visit the [Physical Activity Guidelines Website](#).

NCCAM Six New Members to the NCCAM National Advisory Council

Six new members join the [National Advisory Council for Complementary and Alternative Medicine](#) (NACCAM). The NACCAM is charged with exploring complementary and alternative medical practices in the context of rigorous science and with the training of Complementary and Alternative Medicine researchers. The Advisory Council is composed of physicians, scientists, licensed complementary and alternative medicine practitioners, and public representatives. Members, who serve four year terms, offer recommendations on the priorities for complementary and alternative medicine research, research training, and disseminating health information derived from NCCAM's research.

The six new members of the NCCAM Advisory Council include:

- Lori Arviso Alvord, M.D., Dartmouth Medical School, Hanover, NH
- Stephen Barnes, Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, AL
- Sheldon Cohen, Ph.D., Carnegie Mellon University; University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine; and Pittsburgh Cancer Institute, Pittsburgh, PA
- Fabio Cominelli, M.D., Ph.D., University of Virginia Health System, Charlottesville, VA
- Margery L.S. Gass, M.D., University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH
- Frank M. Torti, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.P., Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Winston-Salem, NC

For more information, please visit the [NIH Press Room](#).

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

APHA Public Health Fellowship in Government — The American Public Health Association (APHA) is offering a year long public health fellowship in Washington, DC. The fellowship offers a public health professional the opportunity to spend one year working in the nation's capital on legislative, regulatory and policy issues that would benefit from the input of someone with public health expertise. The fellowship is designed to provide a unique public policy learning experience, to demonstrate the value of science-government interaction, and to make practical contributions to enhancing public health science and practical knowledge in government. Candidates must have a MPH or a Doctorate in a public health discipline plus 5 years of experience in a public health setting and should send in applications by **July 20, 2007**. For more information, please visit the [APHA Website](#).

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