Low NIA Payline Prompts Action from Researchers

A downward trend in the number of funded National Institute on Aging (NIA) research project grant (RPG) applications is causing concern among numerous scientific organizations and professionals. The NIA’s overall payline — the percentile rank up to which an agency intends to fund the majority of, if not all, the grant applications it receives — dropped to an all-time low of eight percent in fiscal year (FY) 2010.

“The current funding situation at NIA is the most critical problem that has faced the aging community since NIA was established in 1974,” said former GSA President Arlan Richardson, PhD. “Not only is the funding payline the lowest in the history of NIA, but it is currently the lowest of any institute in the National Institutes of Health (NIH). If something is not done quickly, we risk losing the next generation of aging researchers.”

Richardson, during a September meeting of the National Advisory Council on Aging (NACA), initiated a successful motion to conduct a review of the NIA extramural program to evaluate the effects of the current payline and to identify strategies for raising it to that of the other major NIH institutes. The NACA, which meets three times per year, consists of appointed members who make recommendations on the conduct and support of research conducted at the Institute.

In FY 2007, the payline for grants at the NIA was at 14.6 percent. However, that payline has been lowered to eight percent currently, while other major institutes have maintained paylines at between 15 and 20 percent. A blog at writedit.wordpress.com/nih-paylines-resources contains direct links to payline information at each institute and center within the NIH.

The current data available from the NIA suggest that the major reason for the low payline is due to a significant shift in funding from smaller grants to very large grants. From FY 2005 to FY 2009, for example, funds for NIA

Capitol Hill Activities Further Workforce Advocacy

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA) — a coalition of which GSA is a founding member — has undertaken new efforts to urge lawmakers and others to invest in recruitment and training for health care workers who can meet the needs of America’s aging population.

Dozens of members from the EWA’s 28 constituent organizations assembled in Washington, DC, on September 21 (coinciding with World Alzheimer’s Day) to meet in groups with their senators and representatives, covering a total of nine states. A second advocacy day focusing on legislators from additional states took place on October 21.

The visits allowed these gerontology experts to make the case for significant increases in appropriations for education and training in various established programs. The EWA carefully selected the advocates to reflect the interdisciplinary teams needed to care for the nation’s older citizens. Several individuals who participated were invited based on GSA’s recommendation.

“I found the very organized effort of EWA to be a most effective method for getting the word out to members of Congress in their targeted states,” said Sandra Butler, PhD, a professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Maine.

Together with a nurse and a geriatrician, Butler met with Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), Representative Michael Michaud (D-ME), and a staffer from the office of Representative Chellie Pingree (D-ME).

“Our Maine Senators, Snowe and Collins, and Representative Michaud were very receptive. They were pretty knowledgeable
Effective Care Coordination is Everyone’s Responsibility

By James Appleby, RPh, MPH
jappleby@geron.org

The Society’s Annual Scientific Meeting themes are always thought provoking, but it’s particularly energizing to see a topic inspire workable solutions for a needed reform. This is certainly the case with “Transitions of Care Across the Aging Continuum,” which GSA will explore when we head to New Orleans this month.

The last issue of Gerontology News reported on a related special summit where GSA assembled a team of experts to focus on eliminating barriers to the successful implementation of care coordination models. After extensive deliberations, we made a great deal of progress on developing some promising recommendations.

GSA President Peggye Dilworth-Anderson, PhD, who was the driving force behind the summit, will share the new findings during a special symposium at the upcoming Annual Scientific Meeting. “Diffusing Care Coordination Models: Translating Research into Policy & Practice” will take place on Monday, November 22, at noon in Grand Salons 15 and 18.

Some of the proposed courses of action for enhancing care coordination include strengthening the evidence base, facilitating access to information and materials, instituting standards of competency, identifying regulatory barriers, promoting greater flexibility within state Medicaid programs, and pushing for changes within the Older Americans Act.

Instituting these reforms is a necessary step toward implementation. Yet effective care coordination needs to begin with a commitment from providers themselves. Health care professionals must be determined to work collaboratively with one another, even as patients move from one setting to the next. As I’ve reflected on this topic in preparation for the meeting, it has become evident that care coordination is everyone’s responsibility—a responsibility that doesn’t end at the point of care transition, but rather when it’s clear that the transition has been carried out successfully.

The best way to cultivate this patient-centered approach for providers would be during their training. Many professions—physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and mental health professionals, to name a few—already include some language about collaboration in their codes of ethics. For example, a clause from the American Nurses Association’s code states, “Nurses should actively promote the collaborative multidisciplinary planning required to ensure the availability and accessibility of quality health services to all persons who have needs for health care.”

What’s notable is that these ethical expectations do not specifically address transitions of care. I see, however, an opportunity for GSA to address this concern. Our membership consistently demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary cooperation. As such, OSA members are uniquely positioned to instill this philosophy of ensuring that care transitions have been successful—the most integral component of care coordination—in other individuals with whom they work. As 3,500 of us prepare to gather in New Orleans, the meeting will be a perfect time to discuss the best ways to accomplish this.

I wish everyone safe travels.

Sincerely,

James

From the Executive Director
GSA Fellow Jeanne Bader, PhD, a professor emerita at California State University, Long Beach, passed away in late September. From 1981 to 1988, she directed the Center for Gerontology at the University of Oregon. After spending four years heading the Minnesota Area Geriatric Education Center at the University of Minnesota, she took over as director of the Gerontology Program at California State University, Long Beach, where she also directed the Center for Successful Aging. Bader’s research focused on beliefs and expectations regarding age and seniority as variable in higher education. Her work included studies of older and retired gerontologists and activities intended to foster greater collaboration and exchange among professionals in the fields of aging and disability.

Estela Medrano, PhD, a deputy editor of the Journal of Gerontology: Biological Sciences, passed away on August 30. Medrano received a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Buenos Aires in her native Argentina in 1979. That year, she received a Fogarty International Fellowship from the National Institutes of Health to study at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard University. In 1982, she returned to Argentina to start her own laboratory, where she began pioneering research into breast cancer using stem cells and in skin cancer studying melanoma. In 1988, she joined the Department of Dermatology at the University of Cincinnati, where she continued studies of melanoma and skin pigment-producing cells. In 1995, Medrano moved to Houston, TX, to join the Baylor College of Medicine’s Huffington Center on Aging faculty as an associate professor. She was appointed a full professor of molecular and cellular biology in 2003.

New Publication by Member

“Caring — The Essential Guide,” by Lorena Tonarelli. Published by need2know.

Members in the News

• GSA Fellow and Behavioral and Social Sciences Section Chair-Elect David Ekerdt, PhD, was quoted in the September 16 edition of The New York Times’ “The New Old Age” blog. He discussed ways in which family members can help manage an older person’s possessions in later life.
• A September 17 blog entry on CBS’ moneywatch.com website focused on a recent lecture by Helen Dennis. She advised people to seek post-retirement work that shares the same positive traits as their current jobs.
• An August 30 article in The New York Times featured quotes from Luigi Ferrucci, PhD, Stephanie Studenski, MD, MPH, Elena Volpi, MD, and Roger Fielding, PhD. They spoke about current methods to address sarcopenia.
• A special collector’s issue of Zoomer magazine has listed GSA Fellow Gloria Gutman, PhD, in its “Canada’s Top 45 over 45” list.

Member Spotlight

GSA’s website features monthly Q&A sessions with distinguished members. The current spotlight shines on:

Ingrid Connidis, PhD

Visit www.geron.org/Membership/member-spotlight to ask questions and read previous interviews.

Colleague Connection

During September’s Membership Month, the Colleague Connection program was expanded to reward all individuals who referred new members to the Society. See the complete list of participants on page 6. For more details on the Colleague Connection promotion, which includes a chance to win free lodging at the annual meeting, visit www.geron.org/connection.

Pasupuleti Recognized for Outstanding Research

Sudershan Pasupuleti, PhD, has received the 2010 Outstanding Research Award from the University of Toledo’s College of Health Science and Human Service. He is currently an associate professor with the Department of Social Work and serves as director of the school’s Office of Service Learning and Community Engagement. Pasupuleti also is a participant in the Hartford Faculty Scholars Program, which is administered by GSA on behalf of the Geriatric Social Work Initiative. He has taught courses on human behavior sequence, practice with organizations and communities, social research and statistics, social administration, social policy and planning, human resource management, and service learning in both undergraduate and graduate programs at different schools of social work for over 17 years in the U.S. and India.

Morgan State Awards Simpson’s Teaching Efforts

Gaynell Simpson, PhD, has been given a teaching award from Morgan State University in recognition for outstanding instruction in urban gerontology. Simpson is a participant in the Hartford Faculty Scholars Program, which is administered by GSA on behalf of the Geriatric Social Work Initiative. Her current research focuses on examining the influence of social resources on health of African American grandmothers engaged in multiple caregiving roles. She additionally has been involved in various clinical and community-based research projects focusing on older African American caregivers and mental health.

Nashiro Earns APA Distinction

Kaoru Nashiro, a fourth-year PhD candidate at the University of Southern California Davis School of Gerontology, has received a Division 20 Award from the American Psychological Association (APA). She was recognized for her research examining how emotional content affects learning in younger and older adults.

California Council Names Pynoos as 2010 Birren Award Winner

GSA Fellow Jon Pynoos, PhD, the UPS Foundation Professor of Gerontology at the University of Southern California (USC) Davis School of Gerontology, is the 2010 recipient of the Betty and James E. Birren Senior Scholar Award from the California Council on Gerontology and Geriatrics. Pynoos serves as the director of the National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modifications and the co-director of the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence at USC.

In Memoriam

Estela Medrano, PhD
Social Security, Legislative Discussions Slated for New Orleans; Rother’s Analysis Continues

This year’s policy series at GSA’s Annual Scientific Meeting in New Orleans addresses a variety of important topics in aging and health policy. Foremost is the “Congressional Aging Issues Update” (Monday, November 22, 7:30 a.m., Bridge-Riverside Building), which highlights legislative developments in the areas of the Older Americans Act reauthorization, health care reform implementation, and income security. Panelists include several representatives from the Senate Special Committee on Aging, including Staff Director Debra Whitman, PhD, Senior Policy Counsel Ashley Carson, JD, and Policy Advisor Cara Goldstein. AARP’s John Rother, JD, will moderate.

One of the policy sessions, “Speak Out! Social Security and Women” (Sunday, November 21, 5:30 p.m., Grand Ballroom A), will feature an interactive component. It’s taking place immediately following the GSA Business Meeting. This forum will address Social Security’s particular importance for women and will ask the audience for opinions and suggestions on the need for reform and its future. This session is being organized in partnership with the Task Force on Women and the Public Policy Committee. The panel will be chaired by former GSA President Carroll Estes, PhD, of the University of California, San Francisco. Other speakers include Pamela Herd, PhD, of the University of Wisconsin, Madison; Eric Kingson, MPA, PhD, of Syracuse University; and Barbara Butrica, PhD, of the Urban Institute.

Other policy series sessions include:
- “Age Discrimination and Employment Issues of Older Workers in Good Times and Bad” (Friday, November 19, 5 p.m., Melrose)
- “Health and Aging Policy Fellows: Lessons Learned” (Sunday, November 21, 5:30 p.m., Grand Ballroom A)
- “Civic Engagement in Later Life: Translating Promising Ideas into Reality within Diverse Communities” (Monday, November 22, noon, Grand Salons 19 and 22)
- “Transforming and Rebalancing Long-Term Care Services: Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead” (Monday, November 22, 2 p.m., Grand Ballroom D)
- “Subjective Well-being after Age 50 in the USA and UK” (Sponsored by Age UK, Monday, November 22, 4 p.m., Kabacoff-Riverside Building)

Rother Expands on Social Security’s Significance

In last month’s column, Rother discussed his hopes for the President’s Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, as well as issues related to the structure and function of Social Security. Here, he offers his views on privatization, health care reform, and the economic role Social Security plays for its beneficiaries. (When you attend the “Congressional Aging Issues Update,” feel free to ask him his comments that you read here!) This is the second installment in a two-part interview.

Rother is the executive vice president of policy, strategy, and international affairs at AARP. He recently received the prestigious Robert Ball Award for Outstanding Achievements in Social Insurance from the National Academy of Social Insurance, honoring his lifetime of advocacy to strengthen the Social Security and Medicare programs.

Brian W. Lindberg: Would you please say a little bit more on the role Social Security is playing for a large number of Americans now?

John Rother: Social Security is playing two roles. One, it is the foundation of family lifetime security because of its disability benefits and survivor benefits, as well as its retirement benefits. It was never designed to be adequate unto itself. But it is difficult to think about Social Security’s role in the future being less than it is today because alternatives are so weak. The second role, which was never anticipated, is really a form of unemployment insurance for older workers. A record number of people are claiming early benefits this year not necessarily because they want to retire, but because they were forced into it. They are looking at a lifetime of reduced benefits. Social Security for them may be a lifeline as their unemployment runs out. So that’s a role that was never part of Social Security’s design, but in the current circumstances, it’s a very important one.

BWL: Some GSA members have done excellent work on the current inequities that women, particularly, face under the system. Given the current debate, do you think that hope is lost to actually improving benefits this time around?

JR: I think Social Security’s treatment of women and spouses is badly outdated. Really, these policies are at least two generations old and so much has changed since then. Given the pressures on the program and given the need to raise additional money I think it’s going to be difficult to look only at benefit increases. I think the hard thing here is that we may have to look at trade-offs. We may have to think about whether we want to give so much money to the non-working spouse if the result is that the people who have contributed all their lives are not seeing a fair return on their contributions. I would like to see more analysis and more public debate about how to make Social Security more equitable.
**BWL:** Some have voiced support for raising the retirement age to shore up the trust fund. What I haven’t heard is support for older workers who are in physically demanding jobs. Also, what would raising the retirement age mean for those minority populations who have a shorter life expectancy?

**JR:** Life expectancy is not relevant because Social Security is an annuity, not a lump sum life insurance benefit. It’s designed to support you month-to-month, for however long you live. The fact that some people die early and others live late into old age does not mean that Social Security needs adjustment. If we tried to equalize expected lifetime benefits, men would gain and women would suffer in their monthly benefits. But the issue of demanding jobs is very relevant. Not everyone has the same option of working longer. Those unable to work beyond a certain time due to the demands of their job need occupational pensions, but many do not have them. Raising the normal retirement age for Social Security isn’t about asking people to work longer — it’s simply an across-the-board benefit cut. It’s unrealistic to expect employers to hire and for people to work beyond age 67. Not just manual labor, but most people. I think we may need to have some way of recognizing the particular situation of people who have physically difficult jobs within Social Security — maybe an expanded disability program at age 62 or some other occupational-based pension supplement. Other countries have addressed this issue, and we can learn from them.

**BWL:** Do you believe that the privatization efforts are dead, and secondly, what are the lessons we may have learned from that debate in terms of advocacy and education that we may be able to use now as we move toward other reforms?

**JR:** I think that privatization is mostly dead; it has no realistic chance of moving forward. That’s one positive thing about the current debate — we’re talking about traditional options for Social Security. We are not putting the whole program at risk. What we’ve learned from the debate over private accounts is that it’s much easier to oppose things based on fear than it is to propose things based on hope. That is true for health reform and I think it was also true for the Social Security debate under George W. Bush. We did a great job of scaring the public, but in that case, in my view, it was justified. We illustrated the risk and the public had no appetite at all for putting Social Security at risk.

**BWL:** Georgetown University public policy professor Judy Feder wrote an article a few years back, called “Truth vs. Propaganda: Why Research Matters in Public Policy,” and it addressed the notion that the research, the data, and the teaching of the people out there who are practitioners are really important. What is your feeling right now about how truth is playing a role in this debate?

**JR:** It’s hard to be optimistic about the role of truth when you’re inside the beltway during an election season! One thing that Social Security has going for it — if you think of this debate as a baseball game, there is an umpire: the Social Security actuary. It’s hard to get away with untruth with the actuary calling balls and strikes, at least in the fiscal context, and Social Security is easier for the public to understand than a lot of other programs, especially health care. At the same time, we are seeing a conscious campaign to mischaracterize health care legislation and to scare people on the basis of that. I am not sure efforts to do the same on Social Security are going to be anywhere near as successful. I think the public understands Social Security, embraces it, supports it, and according to the polling we’ve done, will strongly resist efforts to scale it back. So truth is important, but it’s also true that complexity is the enemy of truth in terms of what the public can understand.

**BWL:** You gave a very interesting presentation for the Leadership Council on Aging Organizations a while back on the role that health care costs play in the deficit. Could you talk a bit about that?

**JR:** Last year when inflation was zero in most sectors of the economy, health costs went up more than eight percent. That’s a huge differential, and when you compound that over time it gets scary, both for the federal deficit and for household finances. When you project it out, as the Congressional Budget Office has done, the cost for health care is about ten times as much as for Social Security in the federal budget. It dwarfs everything else. Keeping health costs affordable is by far the most important long-term fiscal imperative we face as a country. The health reform bill made the first step in that direction but we have to take several more steps if we are going to really stabilize the costs of health care. We spend so much more in this country than anywhere else, which implies that savings are possible without any loss in access or quality. Social Security is a smaller part, maybe ten percent of the long-term entitlement fiscal challenge, but it is the easiest ten percent, and because Medicare Part B premiums are deducted from the Social Security check, the increase in the cost of Part B and Medicare will have the impact of reducing the net check that people receive going forward in a very serious way.

**BWL:** Are there other issues you would like to make sure are included in this conversation for GSA members?

**JR:** One thing that warrants a lot more analysis is the fact that the gap between the haves and have-nots is growing in our population to an alarming extent. And that has implications on the economic situation for retirees. The question is raised as to whether Social Security should be changed to respond to that. Too many people say we can’t touch Social Security, but I believe that Social Security should evolve as social conditions evolve. Maybe we should do more for people who don’t have any other way to fund their futures but maybe we should do a little less for others. I think that’s a legitimate area for analysis and it’s an area that I don’t think has received adequate attention.
Membership Drive Extends GSA Family

During September’s Membership Month, GSA awarded a $25 Amazon.com gift card to anyone who referred a new member to join the Society. As a result, 67 new people were recruited. GSA congratulates all the participants and extends a warm welcome to its newest members! The gift card winners are listed below.

For the first time, GSA also offered a grand prize during Membership Month. For each new member referred, participants were entered into a drawing for a mini digital camcorder. The winner, chosen using randomizer.org, is Darlene Yee-Melichar for her referral of Geri Thomas.

Continued from page 1 - Capitol Hill Activities Further Workforce Advocacy

about elder issues but asked good questions about the situation in Maine, as did the legislative aides in all four offices. It was an empowering experience for me,” Butler added.

A delegation from Utah reported similarly fruitful experience. Three GSA members from the University of Utah — Marilyn K. Luptak, PhD, MSW, Mark Supiano, MD, and Cherie Brunker, MD — were joined by a nursing instructor and a certified nursing assistant. They met with staff from the offices of Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Senator Robert Bennett (R-UT), and James Matheson (D-UT).

“We discussed a range of topics including the shortage of geriatric health professionals in the country — an issue of particular concern for Utah because we have one of the fastest-growing 65-plus populations in the country — and asked them to support increased funding for geriatrics education and training programs in a variety of disciplines and federal loan forgiveness programs,” Luptak said.

“We also discussed the need to support direct care workers and family caregivers and asked them to co-sponsor the Title VII Direct Care Worker Training Program,” she continued. “Specific to my discipline, social work, I talked about how critical the role of social work is in care coordination and chronic disease management and the need to prepare more social workers to work effectively with older adults and their families in urban and rural settings.”

The EWA is a project of the Tides Center and Tides Advocacy Fund and is supported by member contributions and grants from The Atlantic Philanthropies and the John A. Hartford Foundation. Former President Michele Saunders, DMD, MS, MPH, serves as GSA’s official representative.
Make the Most of Your Meeting Experience

The Annual Scientific Meeting is just around the corner! As you may already know, the meeting is being held in New Orleans, LA, at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside from November 19 to 23. Check out the information below to make the most of your experience.

Meeting Planner
View the online meeting planner before you arrive in New Orleans to help you plan your time and decide on the sessions and events you want to attend. The planner can be found by clicking the “Build My Schedule” button at www.geron.org/2010. Try searching for sessions by the names of authors in your field. It often can be more meaningful and satisfying to attend sessions by professionals in your area of interest rather than by topic alone.

ESPO-Sponsored Events
Look for the following ESPO events in your meeting planner and make a point to attend these sessions that were developed specifically by and for students and new professionals!

Saturday, November 20
New Member Meet & Greet: 7 to 8 a.m.
ESPO Breakfast and Community Meeting: 8 to 10 a.m.
ESPO Presidential Symposium: “The Struggle Between Personal and Professional Identity: Transitioning from Student to Emerging Scholar and Professional.” 12:30 to 2 p.m.
ESPO Wine and Cheese/Fellows Meet the Students: 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 21
ESPO-Sponsored Health Sciences Symposium: “Emerging Scholars in Health and Aging Research,” 8 to 9:30 a.m.
ESPO-Sponsored Social Research, Policy, and Practice Symposium: “Programmatic Approaches to Healthy Aging and Community Living,” 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Monday, November 22
Campus Ambassadors Meeting: 7 to 8 a.m.
ESPO-Sponsored Behavioral and Social Sciences Symposium: “Correlates of Functional Disability in Older Adults: Implications for Minority Populations,” 9:30 to 11 a.m.
ESPO-Sponsored Biological Sciences Symposium: “Human Biogerontological Research: Results from ESPO Researchers,” noon to 1:30 p.m.

ESPO Lounge
The ESPO lounge will be available for all students and new professionals in New Orleans! The purpose of the ESPO Lounge is to provide a place to rest, network with peers, meet ESPO Executive Committee chairpersons, and have a chance to win raffle prizes! The lounge is scheduled to be open from Saturday, November 20 to Monday, November 22 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Check the meeting planner to verify the room location.

Hotel and Transportation
There are three official GSA hotels reserved specifically for GSA members. While most of the meeting sessions are being held at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, the other two hotels are close in proximity and are very accessible to the conference. Airport Shuttle in New Orleans offers discounted rates to members staying at one of GSA’s official hotels. Visit the GSA website for more information regarding hotels, flights, and shuttles.

Twitter/Facebook
Follow ESPO on Facebook and Twitter before and during the meeting to obtain up-to-date meeting information such as roommate inquiries, ESPO events, and more! Visit www.twitter.com/GSA_ESPO and search for “GSA Emerging Scholars and Professional Organization” at www.facebook.com. You can also find ESPO events in the ESPO section of the online meeting planner.

Roommates
Your request for a roommate can be posted on Facebook. Join the “GSA Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization” group and get connected today!

Networking
The annual GSA meeting is a great place to network with other scholars and professionals. Identify people you would like to meet before you go and have your advisor or other GSA mentor introduce you. Remember to bring business cards to share your contact information with the people you meet. Also, bring handouts of your poster or paper so that attendees can leave with your name and study findings in their hands. We also encourage you to attend the ESPO Breakfast and Community Meeting and ESPO Wine and Cheese event, which are designed to encourage networking amongst your peers and GSA mentors!

Poster/Paper Presentations
If you are presenting at the meeting, be sure to follow the instructions for each type of presentation. Verify the time and room location of your presentation. For posters, check that the size of your poster is appropriate for the space provided and bring extra tacks should you need them to hang your poster. For papers, practice your presentation and make sure it falls within the time allotted for you to present. Make sure you are using the GSA PowerPoint template provided by GSA and bring a computer, as they are not provided at the meeting.

Things to Pack
You may want to pack a notebook for taking notes at sessions, business cards, snacks to help minimize the cost of food, and a sweater/jacket for rooms that may get chilly.

New Orleans Attractions
There are many great things to explore and experience in New Orleans. Visit the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau website for information about everything New Orleans has to offer: www.neworleanscvb.com/mini/index.cfm/minisiteID/245/hit/1. Also, GSA has organized several tours for individuals interested in staying in New Orleans after the conference. Check out these exciting tours by clicking the “Travel & NOLA” button at www.geron.org/2010.
Fellowship Allows Diverse Reporters To Cultivate Public Awareness of Aging Issues

GSA and New America Media (NAM) have selected 15 journalists for the new MetLife Foundation Journalists in Aging Fellows Program. They represent a wide range of traditional, new, and ethnic media, such as USA Today, Sing Tao Daily, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and TheAtlantic.com.

The fellows will convene during GSA's Annual Scientific Meeting — scheduled for November 19 to 23 in New Orleans — and tap into the conference's 500 presentations and 3,500 expert attendees to develop a major aging-focused story or series. Their proposed projects, to be published early in 2011, will focus on issues such as the struggles of grandparents raising grandchildren, innovations in elder-friendly housing for seniors, challenges for elderly immigrants in the U.S., retirement planning in the recession, seniors' use of new technology, and elders coping with the aftermath of multiple disasters on the Gulf Coast.

These journalists also will report on new research from the meeting and participate in a day-long pre-conference session, where GSA will showcase the latest developments in the field of aging and host discussions with veteran reporters on how to position stories in the current media environment.

“At a time when so much of America seems divided along generational, ethnic, and ideological lines, the stories of aging can bring us together with a new lifelong perspective,” said Sandy Close, founder and executive editor of NAM. “Journalists need to tell stories that reveal how today’s families depend on each other from their youngest to older members.”

The fellowship program — funded by a $75,000 grant from the MetLife Foundation — comes just as the first of the 78 million baby boomers prepare to turn age 65 on January 1, 2011. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the nation’s older population will almost double to 70 million by 2030. Also, the proportion of ethnic elders will double to 40 percent of America’s population aged 65 and over by 2050.

“The tremendous volume of quality research at our conference can help journalists get ahead of the information curve on any trend in aging,” said GSA Deputy Executive Director Linda Harootyan, MSW. “This fellowship will enable participating news organizations — despite severe newsroom budget cuts for many — to bring their audiences cutting-edge findings by the top experts on this vital subject area.”

Harootyan will co-direct the project with Paul Kleyman, the senior editor of NAM’s ethnic elders newsbeat. Kleyman is also founder and national coordinator of the Journalists Network on Aging, which includes more than 1,000 writers on aging.

**2010 Fellows**

**Sally Abrahms**, a freelance writer working with AARP Bulletin, will open the doors on innovative housing options for seniors in three articles on intergenerational co-housing: small, residential “Green Houses” aimed at radically transforming institutional care for frail elders; and innovative intergenerational nursing homes.

**Jane Adler**, a freelance writer working with the Chicago Tribune, will explore how age-friendly communities can combat loneliness and depression in our aging nation as long-time friends leave the neighborhood or die, adult children move far away, and frailty takes its physical toll on one’s mobility.

**April Dembosky**, an independent journalist working with the San Jose Mercury News, will explore intergenerational issues in the hospice and palliative care field. The recognition of palliative care as a medical specialty in 2008 has spurred growth of this field in hospitals and medical schools — but it also has resulted in a generational gap between the new and young crop of end-of-life care doctors and their patients.

**Adolfo Flores**, an editor and reporter for El Nuevo Sol in Los Angeles, CA, and the Pasadena Star-News will focus on grandparents raising or helping to raise their grandchildren. In four articles with multimedia components, he will examine how grandparents often ease the struggle of Latino parents in trying to raise children, the lack of programs and outreach to communities of color, health issues that grandparents face in parenting, and the quality of education that grandparents are helping these children receive.

**Shaleece Haas**, a freelance journalist working with KCAW-Raven Radio in Sitka, AK, will develop a three-part series for statewide public radio to examine how native Alaskan and other seniors are accessing — or failing to access — the services they need. Installments will provide an overview of elders’ needs, explore how community services in small Alaska towns and villages help fill the gap and provide elder caring for their elderly, and show how caregivers are helping their aging parents, often from a distance.

**Christina Hernandez**, a freelance journalist working with the Philadelphia Inquirer, will expose the hidden epidemic of falls affecting elders in the largely African American and Latino community of Camden, NJ. Preventable falls are a major concern in our aging society and lead to major injuries, brain trauma, and death. But their effects also may be compounded by limited access to care that plagues many low-income communities. Hernandez will write a major article or series with multimedia components.

**Janice N. Lloyd**, a senior reporter and blogger for USA Today, will center on how exercise can enhance the quality of life of aging baby boomers in their homes, in 55-plus communities, and in assisted living facilities. How, if at all, do new technologies (apps, nikeyplus gadgets for nanos, pedometers) help? And what are the benefits of exercise approaches, such as running marathons, walking daily, playing tennis, or focusing on balance and posture through Pilates, tai chi, or yoga? Written pieces also will include a video component.
Katrina L. Rogers, a news reporter for the New Orleans Agenda, will write a series of up to five articles with video delving into the impact of Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil disaster on the lives of elders on the Gulf Coast. The series will examine the effects on seniors from the urban neighborhoods of New Orleans to African American fishing communities and how their families are overlooked and silenced by the mainstream media.

Nayita Wilson, a contributing writer for The Louisiana Weekly in New Orleans, will write “Wise Investments,” a series on the challenges African Americans face in saving for and financing their years. In two articles, she will explore how well-off boomers are financially as they transition into the next phase of life, what economic racial differences or disparities may be at work for older African Americans, and how effective financial planning and pre-retirement investments are for them.

Warren Wolfe, a staff writer for the Star Tribune in Minneapolis, MN, will examine the shortage of trained geriatric workers in every health profession — from nursing aides to physicians. America currently has one certified geriatrician for every 2,500 older Americans. Wolfe plans to address the problems of this imbalance and detail the policy choices that will help determine who will care for the aged.

Rong Xiaoping, a reporter for Sing Tao Daily in New York, NY, will explore how the dramatic increase of interracial marriages among young Asians in recent years affects the lives of their aging parents. Asian seniors often find traditions and family obligations to care for them upended when a white husband or Hispanic wife enters the family.

Mohammed Yussuf, the editor-in-chief for Runta (Truth) in Seattle, WA, proposed three stories to be disseminated to the Somali community about depression and isolation among those ages 60 and older. The multimedia packages will include video and photos. The articles will reveal strategies and resources for coping with depression and strengthening support networks within Somali families and communities.

Aylin Zafar, a freelance journalist working with TheAtlantic.com’s Technology Channel, will plug into the brave new world of social media for seniors — from Facebook to Skype — and investigate how this new technology is impacting their quality of life and mental health. Her stories will show how these tools are affecting seniors’ mental health status, particularly among those who have had depression, anxiety, or even dementia.

Mei Zhou and Ke Yuan, producers for the “Zooming In” documentary series at New Tang Dynasty Television’s Los Angeles Bureau and contributors for the Epoch Times in El Monte, CA, will focus on helping Chinese seniors — many of whom are new immigrants — navigate the U.S. healthcare system and communicate with their health care providers. Rather than center on eldercare as a problem, they will describe how culturally specific approaches to health and health practices could benefit American care.

The fellows’ stories will be available at geron.org in early 2011.

Continued from page 1 - Low NIA Payline Prompts Action from Researchers

grants greater $300,000 per year decreased 46 percent, while funds for grants over $3 million per year increased 362 percent.

In recognition of this trend, the Friends of the NIA — a coalition of which GSA is a member — recently issued a letter to President Barack Obama asking for a $300 million increase in the NIA budget for FY 2012.

“Given the enormous sums of money the federal government spends on health care costs associated with age-related diseases, it makes sound economic sense to increase federal resources for aging research,” said Kimberly D. Acquaviva, PhD, MSW, chair of Friends of the NIA and director of the National Collaborative on Aging at The George Washington University. “Bold, visionary, and sustainable investments in the NIA are desperately needed if we want to recruit and retain investigators to careers in aging research.”

The American Aging Association (AGE) also sent a letter — co-signed by GSA Biological Sciences Section Chair-Elect and current AGE President Holly Brown-Borg, PhD — urging NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, to give greater attention to the payline issue. Among its arguments, the letter stated, “The low payline at NIA will translate into an inability to recruit the brightest and best young researchers to the aging field as well as to continue to fund our most productive researchers in the future.”

The NIA plans to issue details on its FY 2011 funding policy once the federal budget has been passed. The agency’s website acknowledges the low payline, stating, “Although multiple factors have contributed to this problem, a rapid increase in the proportion of RPG budget going to awards with direct costs of $500,000 or more is a major contributing factor. Therefore, while NIA is looking at several ways to improve the RPG funding line, one strategy is to introduce tighter control over these large applications and awards.”

Furthermore, NIA has indicated that program division staff will apply stricter scrutiny than previously to requests for permission to submit applications seeking awards with direct costs of $500,000 or more in any one year. For FY 2011, NIA will limit the share of competing RPG funds going to large grants to no more than the share of the competing RPG budget awarded to large grants in FY 2010. NIA will announce — as part of the final FY 2011 funding policy statement — the anticipated proportion of dollars to be assigned to larger and smaller competing awards, respectively, for that year.

Richardson will present a poster on the NIA payline situation during GSA’s upcoming Annual Scientific Meeting in New Orleans, LA. It will be included within the Biological Sciences Section component of the Late Breaker Poster Session, which had not been fully scheduled when this article went to press. A special addendum containing the dates and times for such poster presentations will be included in the materials given to attendees upon registration at the meeting.
Two new AARP Public Policy Institute research reports elucidate important trends in disability, institutional use, community living, family caregiving, and paid home care. “More Older People with Disabilities Living in the Community: Trends from the National Long-Term Care Survey, 1984–2004” and “Trends in Family Caregiving and Paid Home Care for Older People with Disabilities in the Community: Data from the National Long-Term Care Survey” are available for download at www.aarp.org/relationships/caregiving/info-09-2010/0927-ltc-health.html. Over the 20 years covered by the National Long-Term Care Survey, disability rates among older Americans have declined substantially. If 1984 age-specific rates had remained unchanged, 1.3 million more persons age 65 or older would have experienced a disability in 2004. If rates of institutional use among older persons with disabilities had remained constant, three-quarters of a million more older people would have been in institutions, and federal and state Medicaid spending on nursing homes would have been $24 billion higher. The ways in which community-dwelling older people with disabilities managed their conditions also changed significantly between 1984 and 2004. Many more persons with less severe disabilities managed them with assistive devices. Among those receiving human assistance, the vast majority were helped by family caregivers, who increasingly are taking full responsibility for providing care. Since 1994, the proportion of family care supplemented by formal (paid) care declined from 39 percent to 28 percent, and since 1999, the hours of paid care decreased significantly.

GSA Fellow Sara Rix, PhD, has authored a new installment in the AARP Public Policy Institute’s “Insight on the Issues” series. According to “Saving Jobs Through Work Sharing,” workers of all ages have suffered greatly since the start of the recession in 2007; unemployment rates have soared as has duration of unemployment. Older workers have been particularly hard hit; half of the unemployed aged 55 or older have been out of work for more than six months. Some workers have benefited from a program known as work sharing or short-time compensation, which is a work arrangement that spreads reductions in work hours among employees in an effort to eliminate or alleviate the need for layoffs during economic downturns. Workers who might have been terminated remain on the job, and when the economy improves, employers can quickly increase work hours. To view the full text of the report, visit www.aarp.org/work/work-life/info-09-2010/i200-economic.html.

In its latest report, “Technologies for Improving Post-Acute Care Transitions,” the Center for Technology and Aging examines how the use of a variety of existing technologies could reduce hospital readmissions dramatically. Every day thousands of patients are readmitted to hospitals because they did not get adequate follow-up care after their previous hospitalization. In fact, 18 percent of patients are readmitted to a hospital within 30 days of discharge, and as many as 76 percent of these readmissions are preventable. The most recent national figures on health care expenditures indicate that unplanned hospital readmissions cost Medicare $17.4 billion in a single year. The complete report is available for download at www.techandaging.org. It covers four post-acute care transition technology focus areas. Included is information such as technology definitions, how they are used in the home, their impact on readmissions, and charts that compare basic features of various technologies.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released two new issue briefs with current information on two important concerns for elders. “Caregiving in Indian Country: Conversations with Family Caregivers” is a 24-page report on how American Indian families are struggling to maintain their tradition of caring for elders and what changes can help them do so. The brief is posted at www.chronicdisease.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3838. This is a companion piece to an earlier brief, “Caregiving in Indian Country: Tribes Support Family Traditions,” which is available at chronicdisease.org/files/public/CIBIndianCaregiving.pdf. The other brief, “CDC Promotes Public Health Approach to Address Depression Among Older Adults,” is an overview of depression and related issues for seniors and programs CDC runs to help meet this growing problem. It is available for download at www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/briefs.htm, or www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/CIB_mental_health.pdf.
Nursing Fellowship Builds Leadership Skills
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellows program is a three-year advanced leadership program for nurses who aspire to lead and shape health care locally and nationally. Fellows strengthen their leadership capacities through the application of 20 competencies that improve their abilities to lead teams and organizations in improving health and health care. Executive nurse fellowships are open to nurses who currently hold senior leadership positions in health services, scientific and academic organizations, public health and community-based organizations or systems, and national professional, governmental, and policy organizations. Although the program allows fellows to remain at their home institutions, program activities will require approximately four weeks in total time commitment per year (only some of which will require travel). The application deadline is January 18, 2011. More details are available at www.rwjf.org/cfp/enf.

AFAR Solicits Applications for Latest Grants
The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) has announced the availability of its 2011 round of AFAR Research Grants. The major goal of this program is to assist in the development of the careers of junior investigators committed to pursuing careers in the field of aging research. AFAR supports research projects concerned with understanding the basic mechanisms of aging. Projects investigating age-related diseases also are supported, especially if approached from the point of view of how basic aging processes may lead to these outcomes. Projects concerning mechanisms underlying common geriatric functional disorders are also considered. It is anticipated that approximately 10 grants of up to $100,000 each will be awarded in 2011. The deadline for receipt of all applications and supporting materials is December 15. Visit afar.org/afar99.html to learn more.

Postdoctoral Fellows Eligible for Ellison/AFAR Monies
The Ellison Medical Foundation, in partnership with the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR), created the Ellison/AFAR Postdoctoral Fellows in Aging Research Program to encourage and further the careers of postdoctoral fellows with outstanding promise in the basic biological and biomedical sciences relevant to understanding aging processes and age-related diseases and disabilities. The award is intended to provide significant support to permit these postdoctoral fellows to become established in the field of aging. Projects concerned with understanding the basic mechanisms of aging will be considered. Projects investigating age-related diseases are also supported, if approached from the point of view of how basic aging processes may lead to these outcomes. Projects concerning mechanisms underlying common geriatric functional disorders are also considered. Two four-year awards of $500,000 will be awarded. Proposals — in areas where National Institutes of Health awards or other traditional sources of funding are unlikely because the research is high risk — are particularly encouraged if they have the potential to lead to major new advances in our understanding of basic mechanisms of aging. The deadline for receipt of all applications and supporting materials is December 15. For complete details, visit afar.org/ellisonpostdoc.html.

Ellison/AFAR Funds To Bolster Novel Research
Applications are being sought for the 2010 Julie Martin Mid-Career Awards in Aging Research, sponsored by The Ellison Medical Foundation and the American Federation for Aging Research, to encourage outstanding mid-career scientists who propose novel directions of high importance to biological gerontology. Two four-year awards of $500,000 will be awarded. Proposals — in areas where National Institutes of Health awards or other traditional sources of funding are unlikely because the research is high risk — are particularly encouraged if they have the potential to lead to major new advances in our understanding of basic mechanisms of aging. The deadline for receipt of all applications and supporting materials is December 15. Visit afar.org/Ellison%20Mid-Career.html for additional details.

Dominic Frazier
Dominic Frazier is the program associate for GSA’s educational branch, the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE). He joined the staff in October 2006 to work on an AARP-funded project to build an internships database. After its successful completion, he was hired permanently for his current position in January 2007. Frazier is a native of Washington, DC, and attended Southeastern University. He went on to serve six years in the U.S. Air Force as an operation specialist. Subsequently, he was employed for 10 years by the DC National Guard and for five years by defense contractor RCI.

In his role as program associate, Frazier assists the director, volunteer leaders, committees, and member institutions in carrying out AGHE’s mission. He responds to all inquiries about AGHE’s programs and services. He also maintains AGHE’s database of members, subscribers, committees, and institutional representatives. Furthermore, Frazier oversees the website and assists with the preparation and execution of AGHE’s Annual Meeting and Educational Leadership Conference.
Funds To Expand Social Work Training
The New York Academy of Medicine's Social Work Leadership Institute (SWLI) has received a $150,000 grant from the MetLife Foundation to support a national program that expands the workforce of social workers who specialize in aging and improves long-term, community-based care for older adults. The funding will help provide the faculty and staff of participating schools with ongoing technical assistance, training, mentoring, research, and identification of best practices, and on-site orientation and training. Specifically, the MetLife Foundation grant will help launch the SWLI's program in two additional regions; support the recruitment of between 14 and 22 graduate schools of social work to adopt the SWLI; train 20 faculty from existing funded schools in mentorship and leadership skills; and support two-day-long, on-site orientation and training meetings that will be held at every participating school in each region, resulting in 14 to 28 new faculty members trained in geriatric social work practice and aging education.

Foothill Adds Gerontology Certificate
Foothill Community College in Los Altos Hills, CA, has introduced a certificate program in gerontology. The school's Adaptive Learning Division is offering two courses covering both the sociology and psychology of aging. Eventually, classes covering health and aging, senior services, senior fitness, and issues of death, dying, and bereavement also will be available. For incoming freshmen, the courses soon will be offered in conjunction with general education classes, so students can earn an Associate's Degree in gerontology; the units will be transferable to four-year institutions. Foothill currently is talking with local health care providers who are interested in partnering with the program and offering internship opportunities.

Michigan State Bolsters Nursing Education Facilities
Michigan State University's (MSU) College of Nursing broke ground September 24 on the new Bott Building for Nursing Education and Research, a move that supports the college's growth as a national research leader and will help the state address its nursing shortage. The $17.6 million building was supported in part by a $7.45 million stimulus funding grant from the National Institutes of Health to support nursing research; it was the largest competitive federal stimulus grant that MSU received. MSU's nursing professors conduct research in areas such as obesity prevention, symptom management, cancer, gerontology, and care-giving.

Federal Funds Enhance Wyoming School's Geriatrics Education Program
A new $2.1 million continuation of funding will allow a University of Wyoming (UW) College of Health Sciences program to help meet the growing needs of practicing health professionals who serve the state's aging population. The Wyoming Geriatric Education Center, located within the College of Health Sciences' School of Pharmacy, recently received continuation funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources Services Administration. The new grant increases the center's distance education offerings, allows for presentations at major conferences, ensures interdisciplinary faculty training, and strengthens UW curricula in geriatrics.

University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Job Opportunity
An Instructor or Assistant Professor position, Tenure earning or non-tenure earning, is available in the University of Alabama at Birmingham Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, and Palliative Care for a PhD with training in Nutrition Science, Physiology or a related field, and one to five years post-doctoral experience. Experience in conducting applied research in nutrition and sarcopenia. This person will join a multidisciplinary faculty in the Basic Science Section. Extramural grant writing is expected.

Contact: Peter Bosworth, MBA, (bosworth@uab.edu) (quoting Reference 076) The University of Alabama at Birmingham, 1530 3rd Avenue South, CH19 Suite 201, Birmingham, Alabama 35294-2041.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and is responsive to the needs of dual career couples. Female and minority candidates are encouraged to apply.

Job Announcement
Assistant Professor, Mental Health & Aging School of Social Work
Please submit materials on-line, immediately
Job # 58432 http://jobs.uiowa.edu
Questions? mercedes-bern-klug@uiowa.edu
Japan Increases Support for Older Citizens
According to the Yomiuri Shimbun, Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan has instructed his country’s Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry and other concerned government agencies to do more to prevent elderly people from being isolated from society. He said that providing help to elderly individuals and couples who do not live with anyone else will be added to the basic goals to be considered when the government revises the public nursing insurance system in 2012. Kan specifically mentioned three new public services to be promoted nationwide to help elderly citizens maintain links to the wider community: nursing care workers will patrol local communities and check in on the homes of elderly residents; housing for the elderly will be built, with on-site staff or other means of ensuring residents’ well-being; and assistance for elderly people with dementia will be improved.

China Sees Increase in Elderly Urban Suicides
The Xinhua news agency has reported that the suicide rate among Chinese elderly people living in urban areas has risen to a new high. The data were presented at a recent seminar at Peking University. The suicide rate among urban-dwelling Chinese citizens ages 70 to 74 surged to 33.76 per 100,000 people per year during the period from 2002 to 2008, up from 13.39 per 100,000 in the 1990s.

French Pension Protests Continue
Unions in France remain committed to opposing a raise in the country’s retirement age from 60 to 62. Representatives from the French government have said that their pension system will collapse without reform. Officials cast the plan as the only responsible course of action and insist people need to work longer because they are living longer. French unions, however, see retirement at 60 as a firmly entrenched right in a country accustomed to generous state benefits. Conservative French lawmakers already have pushed the pension reform through its first legislative hurdle in the lower house of parliament. The reform’s aim is to make the money-draining pension system break even by 2018. Though the minimum retirement age would be 62, people would have to wait until age 67 if they wanted full pension benefits, up from age 65 today. France’s retirement age would still be lower than in comparable countries. Germany, for example, is set to raise its retirement age over the coming years from 65 to 67 to offset a shrinking, aging population.
The National Institute on Aging (NIA) announces the annual Summer Institute on Aging Research, a weeklong workshop for investigators new to aging research, focused on current issues, research methodologies and funding opportunities. It is the original and premier short-term training Summer Institute for new investigators in aging research. The program includes consultations on the development of research interests. The 2011 Summer Institute will be held July 9 - 15 in Queenstown, MD. Support is available for travel and living expenses. Applications are due March 4, 2011. To increase the diversity of participants, investigators from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or permanent resident.

For additional information and application form contact:

Office of the Director
Office of Special Populations
National Institute on Aging
National Institutes of Health
Building 31, Room 5C-35
31 Center Drive MSC-2292
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-2292
Telephone: (301) 496-0765
Fax: (301) 496-2525
E-Mail: Taylor_Harden@nih.gov

Or

See the “News and Events - What’s New” section of the NIA WEB Page
WEB SITE: http://www.nia.nih.gov

National Institute on Aging
National Institutes of Health
Living the Old Age We Imagine: Higher Education in an Aging Society

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The AGHE Annual Meeting and Educational Leadership Conference is the premier national forum for discussing ideas and issues in gerontological and geriatric education. Educators, clinicians, administrators, researchers, and students share their experiences, expertise, and innovations regarding teaching and learning about aging and older persons.

Registration opens this December. Visit www.aghe.org/am for more information.
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For the past 65 years, GSA has been committed to providing resources and opportunities for its members. Looking towards the future, GSA is proud to continue supporting its members and providing a home for all gerontologists worldwide.

Celebrating 65 years of excellence, GSA is stronger than ever.

To commemorate the organization’s 65th anniversary, the Give65 Campaign, a landmark fundraising initiative, has been launched. Learn more at www.geron.org/give65.