

Population Association of America Association of Population Centers

Office of Government and Public Affairs

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December 16, 2019

The Honorable Diana DeGette
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Sent via email: cures2@mail.house.gov

Dear Congresswoman DeGette and Congressman Upton,

On behalf of the over 3,000 scientists who are members of the Population Association of America (www.populationassociation.org) (PAA) and over 40 federally -funded population research centers comprising the Association of Population Centers (APC), we are writing in response to the “Response to Action: Cures 2.0” discussion draft you recently released.

As you may know, PAA and APC are two organizations that together represent over 3,000 population scientists, such as demographers, sociologists, and economists, who conduct research on the implications of population change. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the primary source of discretionary, competitive funding supporting the population sciences. Therefore, our organizations are very active in coalitions, such as the Coalition for Health Funding and Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research, that promote the important research and research training activities that NIH supports. Further, our organizations were involved in the development and enactment of the 21st Century Cures Act. We recognize the strong, bipartisan leadership you both exhibited during those deliberations and applaud your commitment to work together on 21st Century Cures 2.0 legislation.

In response to your open-ended request for legislative considerations in Cures 2.0, we urge the Committee to reiterate the inclusion of all behavioral and social sciences in any NIH programs that the bill may seek to reauthorize. Behavioral and social research are part of the research continuum inherent in the NIH legislative mandate and should be eligible for any research and research training programs created or reauthorized in Cures 2.0.

We note two areas that the discussion draft suggests the Committee may explore: data and family caregiving. Population scientists have specific expertise in data collection, dissemination, and archiving and, as a result, are often awarded NIH grants and contracts to manage and maintain large-scale, longitudinal data sets, such as the Health and Retirement Study and Fragile Families and Child Well Being Study. The 21st Century Cures bill included provisions affecting NIH data management and policy. Cures 2.0 represents an important opportunity to revisit those provisions and revise as necessary. PAA and APC welcome the opportunity to be involved in such discussions. With respect to family caregiving, we

encourage the Committee to learn more about the family caregiving research portfolio that NIH, specifically the National Institute on Aging, supports, and to consider addressing unmet research needs in the draft legislation.

Once again, thank you for considering our comments. If you need further assistance, please contact Ms. Mary Jo Hoeksema, Director, Government and Public Affairs, Population Association of America and Association of Population Centers, at maryjo@popassoc.org. We look forward to working with you and your staff on Cures 2.0.

Sincerely,



John B. Casterline
2019 PAA President



Kathleen A. Cagney
2019 APC President