

A quarterly report on activities and events at the National Opinion Research Center.

New Initiatives



NORC to Conduct CDC Risk Factor Survey on Health Disparities: Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health - REACH US

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently awarded NORC a 5-year contract to conduct the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Across the U.S. (REACH US) Risk Factor Survey.

REACH is the cornerstone of CDC's efforts to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in areas such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, adult immunization, and breast and cervical cancer. In 2007, CDC established grants with 40 organizations to develop and implement innovative strategies to reduce health disparities. Beginning in 2009, NORC will conduct annual REACH surveys in 28 communities to provide CDC with quantitative data that measure the progress and achievements of the REACH communities. Within each community, a total of 900 adults will be surveyed each year.

From 2001-2005, NORC conducted REACH surveys primarily using a random-digit-dial (RDD) telephone methodology. For REACH US, NORC will implement an innovative address-based sampling (ABS) approach to maximize both coverage and response rates. ABS will provide the opportunity to screen and interview respondents over the telephone, through the mail, on the Web, and in-person.

Contact Angela DeBello, project director, at debello-angela@norc.org or 312-759-4069 or Kari Carris, associate project director at carris-kari@norc.org or 312-759-4295.

Ongoing Projects

Teaching Artists Research Project

Senior Vice President Kathleen Parks, Director of NORC's Academic Research Centers, is pleased to announce a renewed project in ARC's growing research agenda focused on arts and culture. NORC has received support from a number of sponsors to extend the work of the [Teaching Artists Research Project](#). The Teaching Artists Research Project explores the role of working artists who also teach in schools as well as neighborhood and local arts centers and other public and private venues. The number of artists who make teaching in primary or secondary schools a part of their careers seems to be rising as school systems have begun to employ fewer art teachers. For the initial phase of the study, NORC provided guidance to Columbia's Center for Arts Policy in designing the research, conducting stakeholder meetings and focus groups, and developing survey instruments for both teaching artists and administrators of teaching artist programs.

The new grants will support a broad census of teaching artists and program administrators in California urban, suburban, and rural areas utilizing the key objectives and the scope of the study established in the first phase. Goals include describing the background and training of teaching artists and the character of the institutions in which they work. This funding will also support the third phase of the study; the development of a qualitative interview guide and interviews with a sample of survey participants as well as key informants in the California communities. The study will attempt to determine what factors contribute to or undermine teaching artists in various settings.

Contact Michael Reynolds, the project director, at (773) 256-6073 or Reynolds-michael@norc.org. Visit the [project page](#) to learn more and see a complete list of sponsors.

Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey Energy Suppliers Survey



NORC's Health Care Delivery and Health Outcomes Department will conduct the [Energy Supplier Survey component of the Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey](#) (CBECS-ESS) for the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

The CBECS-ESS will gather data directly from the commercial firms, cooperatives, municipal utilities, and other organizations that supply energy to the commercial buildings that were the subject of the 2007 Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS), a national sample survey, that is the only national source of statistical information on both the consumption of energy and energy-related characteristics of commercial buildings.

NORC conducted the 2007 CBECS and also the most recent rounds of both of EIA's household-focused energy studies—the Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS) and its Energy Supplier Survey component (RECS-ESS). Contact Mike Colicchia, the project director, at (312) 759-4081 or colicchia-michael@norc.org.

NORC Data Enclave Gets Additional Funding

NORC learned this month of additional support for the [NORC Data Enclave](#), a tool that allows the sharing, among a closed community of researchers, of datasets that are too sensitive to share broadly.

The US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, has amended the cooperative agreement Sensitive Micro Data Dissemination for Research Access, which supports the Enclave, to provide additional funding to support ongoing work to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which USDA's sensitive micro data are managed and accessed. In particular, the new funding will: (1) increase capacity to accommodate up to 20 research participants gaining access to sensitive micro data in a secure collaborative environment; (2) experiment with financial incentives to increase participation in the researcher collaboratory; and (3) create scholarships through a research development funding program to promote projects that contribute to USDA's public sector mission, contributing to a further understanding of the agriculture sector and providing information on the diversity of agriculture and the economic and environmental effects.

Tim Mulcahy is the project director for the Data Enclave. Contact him at (301) 634-9352 or mulcahy-tim@norc.org.

People



Suh to Lead Veterans Policy and Planning Group Project

Ryung Suh joined NORC's Bethesda, MD staff as a Senior Fellow in the Health Policy and Evaluation Department in October. He will direct the Policy and Planning Group project recently awarded to NORC

by the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Rural Health (ORH).

The newly created ORH is charged with establishing evidence-based, collaborative processes to enhance the delivery of care to rural veterans; supporting studies and analyses that identify and promulgate best practices; testing innovative care delivery models through targeted pilot programs; and translating these results into policies to be disseminated across the continuum of care for rural veterans.

NORC will provide support in areas such as communications, meeting and conference planning and management, monitoring and evaluating initiatives, responding to rapidly emerging policy issues, developing innovative pilot projects, conducting targeted studies and analyses. NORC's partners in this effort include University of North Dakota's Center for Rural Health and its Rural Assistance Center, Atlas Research LLC, Georgetown University, and the National Rural Health Association.

Contact Ryung Suh at (301) 634-9347 or suh-ryung@norc.org.

Dymek Joins Health IT Team

Chris Dymek is NORC's newest Health IT Project Manager. She is a health IT professional whose most recent experience includes leading an electronic medical records implementation for five Adventist HealthCare facilities.

Her career focus is on the successful integration of people, process and technology.

Contact Chris at (301) 634-9431 or dymek-chris@norc.org.

Events

Kentucky Governor on Hand for Release of Findings from Appalachian Study of Drug Abuse and Mental Health Issues

Findings from a NORC study for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) were released on August 12 at a press conference in London, KY. Kentucky Governor Steven Beshear, ARC Federal Co-Chair Ann Pope, and NORC researchers Michael Meit, Zhiwei Zhang, and Alycia Infante were on hand to answer questions on the study, which found that the Appalachian region has a lower rate of Methamphetamine use than the rest of the nation but a higher rate of abuse of Opiates such as Oxycontin, especially in coal mining areas.

The story received good local and regional coverage, including mentions in the [Lexington Herald-Leader](#) (KY), the [Journal-News](#) (WV), Louisville Courier Journal, [Kentucky.com](#), [CBS affiliate VolunteerTV](#) (TN), the [Herald-Dispatch](#) (WV), and [WKYT](#) (KY - video), the [Times Tribune](#) (KY) and WEKU - NPR Radio (KY). The story also was reported in [Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Weekly](#) (Vol. 20; No. 32, August 18, 2008 - Abstract). Read the NORC [press release](#) and view the [report](#) on the ARC site.

Publications

Mistreatment of Older People Pegged at 13 Percent

About 13 percent of elderly Americans are mistreated, according to study findings published in the current issue of the *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. The paper, "[Elder Mistreatment in the U.S.: Prevalence Estimates from a Nationally-Representative Study](#)," analyzed data from the [National Social Life, Health and Aging Project \(NSHAP\)](#), a 2005-2006 survey of a random sample of 3,005 community-dwelling adults, ages 57 through 85, for which NORC collected data.

The paper's authors include NORC Chairman Edward O. Laumann, NORC Research Scientist Sarah Leitsch, and NORC Research Associate Linda J. Waite, who also serves as Principal Investigator for the study. Read the University of Chicago News Office [press release](#). The story was reported by [MedHeadlines.com](#), [U.S. News and World Report](#) and numerous other news outlets.

Sex Problems of the Elderly

NORC Chairman Edward O. Laumann, NORC Research Associate Linda J. Waite, and graduate student Aniruddha Das, published the results of a study on sexual dysfunction in the *Journal of Sex Medicine*. [Reuters](#), [WebMD](#) (Aug 13), [ABC News](#) (Australia), [USA Today](#), the [Washington Post](#), [MSNBC](#) (video), [Fox News](#), and the [Chicago Tribune](#), are just a few of the many news outlets that covered this story. Read the [press release](#) on the University of Chicago New Office site, which includes a link to the paper. The data for this analysis came from the [National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project](#) (NSHAP). NORC field interviewers collected data for this study of older Americans, including biomarkers such as blood and saliva samples, and biomeasures such as height and weight measurements. Many NORC staff members also participated in the questionnaire design, sample selection, and project management of the study.

NORC in the News

Selected coverage of NORC projects and staff in the popular press. To subscribe to the weekly news email, contact: savage-cathleen@norc.org



Medicare 'Doughnut Hole' Causing Problems for Seniors

The [New York Times](#) published an editorial (p.A22) on September 2 about the coverage gap ('doughnut hole') in the new Medicare Prescription Drug program. Beneficiaries enrolled in the program pay only co-pays and deductibles until they reach a specific level of spending (currently \$2,400). After that, they are responsible for all of the cost until their out-of-pocket expenses reach \$3,850.

Based on the findings of a report authored by NORC Senior Research Scientist Elizabeth Hargrave, and colleagues at Georgetown University and the Kaiser Family Foundation, the *Times* urged Congress to revisit the need for such a gap. The study found that about 15 percent of beneficiaries who reached the gap stopped taking their medications; another 1 percent reduced their dosage; and others switched to cheaper medications. Read the [press release](#) and the full [report](#) on the Kaiser Family Foundation site.

Higher Education Still a Great Place to Work

The website [Inside Higher Ed](#) featured a story on August 6 about job satisfaction in the academic sector. It is, apparently, still very satisfying, though more so in some disciplines than others. The data come from the [Survey of Doctorate Recipients](#), which NORC conducts on behalf of the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

Artificial Pancreas Technology Progresses

CBS News' [The Early Show](#) featured an August 7 video story about the technology being used to develop an artificial pancreas. NORC Senior Fellow Michael J. O'Grady is working with researchers and clinicians at the University of Chicago Biological Sciences Division and the Center for Health and the Social Sciences to study the health economics of this amazing invention. To see the video, click [here](#) and then select "The Early Show". Scroll down until you see the headline "Diabetes with No Finger Pricks." Learn more about the project [here](#).

Military Compensation Panel Releases Findings

The [Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation](#) recently released Volume II of their findings on the state of military pay and benefits. Stories in [Air Force Link](#) and [Stars and Stripes](#) (both on August 6) focused, respectively, on proposed changes to the TriCare health system and to Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) for those stationed overseas. Former Economics, Labor, and Population Studies Department Head Julia Lane (now at the National Science Foundation) played a role in analyzing data from the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation.

Outraged in America?

A July 31 opinion piece by Arthur C. Brooks for the [Wall Street Journal](#) cites data from the 1996 [General Social Survey](#) (GSS). Brooks contends that Americans are not as outraged as they have been in the past and calls attention to a specific question from the GSS: "How many days in the past week have you felt "outraged?" He compares the 1996 responses to a May 2008 Gallup poll that asked the same question. Apparently, our current level of outrage is overrated.

Gas Prices Affecting Women's Workforce Participation

NORC Senior Fellow and University of Chicago labor economist Dan Black was mentioned in the July 10 issue of the Fort Worth (TX) [Star-Telegram](#) in a story about how gas prices are changing our behaviors. Dan Black, who holds a joint appointment at NORC and the University of Chicago's Harris Graduate School of Public Policy, recently co-wrote a report showing that longer commutes in metropolitan areas have discouraged married Anglo women from entering the work force.

Tom Smith Quoted on Political Polling

The August 21 [Chicago Sun Times](#) featured a story by staff reporter Art Golab on the recent Reuters/Zogby political poll that showed U.S. presidential candidate John McCain gaining ground against Barack Obama after McCain unleashed a series of negative ads. On the question of how to view this new poll, NORC Senior Fellow Tom W. Smith, identified in the story as a "University of Chicago survey expert," stated that the Zogby poll "sounds like something one has to at least consider looking at, but said he would "take it more seriously if other polls confirmed the trend. You really want to see if other surveys are leaning in the same direction," said Smith.



Sick Days Survey Findings Released

The Associated Press released a story on the Public Welfare Foundation's Paid Sick Days study by reporter Stephen Singer that was picked up by the [Alameda Times Star](#) (CA). NORC collected the data and Senior

Fellow Tom W. Smith analyzed it. The story also was reported by [Employee Benefit News](#), [Physorg.com](#), and [Imperial Valley News](#) (CA).

Leaving 'Guyland'

[Newsweek's](#) August 30 Culture section featured an interesting story about young men reaching the traditional milestones of adulthood much later than in previous times. The story cites several survey questions and statistics from the General Social Survey (GSS).

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