

NORC Update

October 2006

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

People

Robert T. Michael, Professor at the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago, former NORC Director, current NORC Trustee, and Director of the Population Research Center, has been named project director on the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, a flagship project for NORC for more than two decades.

Mario Louis Small left Princeton University in July to join the University of Chicago's Sociology Department as an Associate Professor. He also joins NORC as a faculty research associate in the Population Research Center. Small's research has focused on urban poverty, inequality and culture, and migration from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. His book, *Villa Victoria: The Transformation of Social Capital in a Boston Barrio*, was published in 2004 by the University of Chicago Press. It examines social capital in a Boston housing complex inhabited primarily by Puerto Rican immigrants and presents a conditional perspective to the study of neighborhood poverty. Currently, Small is working on a study of the distribution of establishments across neighborhoods, testing the theory that the concentration of poverty threatens the viability of businesses and organizations. He is also studying how childcare centers serve as sources for resource accrual and network development among poor parents.

Announcements

2006 Grant Funds Available for Research

NORC's Center for Excellence in Survey Research announces the availability of grant funds in the \$10,000 to \$20,000 range to NORC staff and to faculty members at the University of Chicago and other universities for research aimed at improving the conduct of survey research. The deadline for submissions is October 15, 2006. Contact Kirk Wolter at wolter-kirk@norc.org or 312-759-4206.

New Initiatives

Medicare Prescription Drug Plans, Hospital Efficiency

NORC was recently awarded a contract to conduct small projects relating to Medicare for the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC). Work may include any of the following activities: convening expert panels; structured interviews; site visits; literature reviews/research papers; policy analysis; data analysis; and small scale surveys. Substantive areas potentially explored include a variety of Medicare topics, including prescription drugs; managed care; out-of-pocket costs; end-of-life care; Medicare modernization; access; and quality.

Recent tasks include work on prescription drug formularies in the new Medicare Part D drug benefit. Using newly available data about enrollment in Part D plans, NORC researchers will examine the numbers of beneficiaries affected by tier structure and utilization management tools and the differences between the January and July 2006 formulary files submitted to Medicare. A second task will look at the effects of drug coverage under Medicare Parts B and D on beneficiaries, physicians, and prescription drug plans. Both tasks will be led by NORC's Katie Merrell and Elizabeth Hargrave and are being conducted with Georgetown University. A third task involves site visits to four hospitals to better understand what makes some hospitals more efficient than others. Janet Sutton and Curt Mueller will lead this effort. For more information, contact Dan Gaylin at gaylin-dan@norc.org.

NORC Establishes Joint Center for Education Research (JCER)

This summer a new research center was established to promote the analysis of education data to inform policy, basic research, and survey research methodology. The center is jointly staffed by NORC staff and University of Chicago faculty, and is concerned with research on all levels of education, from pre-kindergarten through

graduate school. The JCER promotes analytic work by helping to identify and pursue funding opportunities. The center works with NORC data collection project directors, research scientists, and client representatives to identify promising analyses of data we are collecting, and provides peer review support to help improve contract deliverables and prepare papers for presentation and publication. The



Tom Hoffer

Tom Hoffer, Principal Research Scientist in NORC's Education and Child Development Department, will direct the center. He can be reached at hoffer-tom@norc.uchicago.edu. Hoffer has worked on all phases of education survey research, including survey design, data collection, and analysis and reporting. He will work closely with NORC Senior Vice Presidents Harrison Greene (Education and Child Development) and Kathleen Parks (Academic Research Centers) and Professor Stephen Raudenbush, Chair of the Committee on Education at the University of Chicago.

Evaluating Assistance Programs in Benin and the Republic of Georgia.

NORC will partner with the Urban Institute to assess the impacts of foreign assistance delivered in Benin and the Republic of Georgia through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). NORC and subcontractor Urban Institute will devise and conduct evaluations of MCC-supported activities in the Republic of Georgia in the areas of road rehabilitation, regional development, and agribusiness development. NORC's John Felkner and Fritz Scheuren will play leading analytic roles.

Additionally, NORC and Urban will design and implement impact evaluations of three components of the MCC program in Benin, which is designed to accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty by removing constraints to investment. The program aims to improve physical and institutional infrastructure through land tenure reform, expanding access to financial services, and building the capacity of the judicial system.

NORC will work with MCC staff and MCC counterparts in the Government of Benin to develop an evaluation methodology and implementation plan. Kirk Wolter, Michael Reynolds, and John Felkner will play key roles. Please contact Jeff Telgarsky at telgarsky-jeff@norc.org or 202-887-6217 for more information.

Health Economics of Artificial Pancreas Technologies

The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation will undertake a health economics study of continuous glucose sensing and insulin delivery technologies, known as the artificial pancreas. The study will be designed as a companion piece to clinical studies in order to provide sound empirical evidence on the potential costs and benefits of this new technology. Findings from this study will provide the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation with evidence to inform decisions regarding benefits from, and coverage and reimbursement for, the new continuous glucose monitoring technology. The



Michael J. O'Grady

NORC team is headed by Senior Fellow Michael O'Grady (ogrady-michael@norc.org), and will work closely with clinician/researchers at the University of Chicago's Division of Biological Sciences and the Center for Health and the Social Sciences.

Exploring Racial Differences in Communications between Older Patients and Orthopedic Surgeons.

NORC's Academic Research Centers, and the Health Care Delivery and Health Outcomes Department have been awarded a grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to fund research involving analysis of audio taped office visit conversations between orthopedists and patients aged 60 years or older. The study is expected to provide more complete understanding of health disparities that relate to racial differences in communication. The Principal Investigator is Pamela Hudak, a NORC Research Affiliate and Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto. Wendy Levinson, MD, a senior research scientist at NORC and University of Toronto faculty member will also be involved. Contact Kathleen Parks at 773-256-6302 or parks-kathleen@norc.org.

Sexual Violence in Three Minority Communities.

NORC's Public Health and Epidemiology and its Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Criminal Justice Departments have been awarded a contract from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, to support the development of three unique questionnaires to collect data on the definitions and prevalence rates of sexual violence victimization. NORC will partner with TKC Integration Systems, an Alaska Native management firm to conduct cognitive interviewing of African Americans, Hispanics, and Alaska Natives/American Indians.

NORC will conduct 600 in-person interviews with women in these populations. The three year study will build on findings about violence against women in minority communities which emerged from the National Violence Against Women (NVAW) Survey conducted in 1995-96. The Principal Investigator is NORC's Phyllis Newton, who can be reached at newton-phyllis@norc.org.

Religious Change

The Metanexas Institute, which focuses on the scientific study of religion, has made a grant under its Templeton Advanced Research Project to support an examination of religious change. Tom W. Smith (smith-tom@norc.org) will lead the two-year study titled Basic Theories and Models of Religious Change. The project will be conducted in NORC's Academic Research Centers. Major data sources such as the General Social Survey and the International Social Survey Program studies will be analyzed to examine people's views across cohorts, time, and nations.

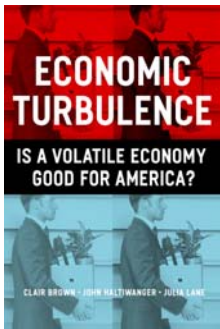
NIST Data Enclave

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has awarded NORC's Departments of Economics and Information Technology a contract to create a data enclave, which will house data on technical innovation projects sponsored by NIST's Advanced Technology Program. The data enclave will offer restricted access to a limited number of researchers, thereby promoting research and learning, without compromising the interests of ATP contractors. Additional federal agencies have already expressed interest in the data enclave approach. For more information, contact Julia Lane at lane-julia@norc.uchicago.edu.

Publications

Economic Turbulence

The University of Chicago Press has published *Economic Turbulence: Is a Volatile Economy Good for America?*, by Julia Lane, Claire Brown; and John Haltiwanger. Lane is



NORC's Senior Vice President for Economics, Labor, and Population Studies. The book was announced at a press conference held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. on September 12. Louis Kincannon, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau;

Michael Teitelbaum, Vice President of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; and Edward M. "Ned" Gramlich, noted economist, spoke at the event. Contact Julia Lane at lane-julia@norc.uchicago.edu or at 202-887-2337 in DC or 312-325-2584 in Chicago.

Projects

Patient Safety Database Work Expanded

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has awarded NORC's Information Technology and its Health Policy and Evaluation Departments a contract to perform additional work in support of the Network of Patient Safety Database work begun last year. The first phase of the effort involved conducting an inventory of patient safety incident reporting systems and developing a database and web-based application to organize the metadata collected. System level information collected includes data elements from incident reporting systems and their definitions, encoding systems or taxonomies, and policy statements. The next phase will focus on synthesizing information collected and laying the ground work for a national database that will integrate incident data collected from systems throughout the country. Contact Mike Tilkin at tilkin-mike@norc.org or Dan Gaylin at gaylin-dan@norc.org.

National Survey of Former Prisoners

Senior Vice President Henry Brownstein, Director of the Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Criminal Justice (SAMHCJ) Department, is pleased to announce that NORC has been awarded a contract by the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, to conduct the National Survey of Former Prisoners. The survey focuses on sexual victimization while in prison. To guard respondent privacy while collecting data on such a highly personal topic, the survey will use NORC-developed touch-screen audio computer-assisted self-interviewing (TACASI). Interviewing will take place in parole offices. The survey grows out of a pilot survey conducted by NORC in 2005. Candace Johnson, will direct the project. Contact Henry Brownstein at brownstein-henry@norc.org.



AHA Quality Center Site Goes Live

NORC recently completed an important project for the American Hospital Association (AHA) to support the development of the AHA Quality Center, a major new AHA initiative which will enable the association and its members to realize the potential of their investments in patient safety and quality improvement. This project, a joint project of NORC's Information Technology and Health Research groups, builds upon prior success with healthcare quality projects in the federal sector.

The project included development of a knowledge repository to provide users with actionable, targeted information on hospital clinical care quality and patient safety; design and implementation of a website/portal to enable and empower healthcare executives and their staffs to access and share knowledge; and setup of a member matching system to facilitate knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer networking. The site can be accessed at www.ahaqualitycenter.org. Contact Mike Tilkin at tilkin-mike@norc.org for more information.

Walsh Center for Rural Health

The Health Services Research Administration has renewed funding for this center which examines critical issues involving the health of Americans in rural areas. For more information, visit: <http://www.norc.org/issues/health6.asp> or contact Curt Mueller at Mueller-curt@norc.org or 202-887-2356. Upcoming projects of the Center include:

- 1) Development of an evacuation planning and response tool for counties in western New York State, using algorithms to address scenarios such as the detonation of a dirty bomb or an outbreak of pandemic influenza.
- 2) An Analysis of Disparities in Mental Health Status and Substance Abuse Prevalence and Access to Treatment Services in the Appalachian Region.
- 3) Rapid Response to Requests for Rural Data Analysis & Issue-Specific Research Studies.

Doctorate Data Project

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has provided additional funding to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) for a new round of data collection (slated for 2007), a questionnaire modification experiment, and some additional analytic work. Mary Hess is the SED Project Director. The project web site is: <http://www.norc.org/issues/docdata.htm>

In addition, NSF is devoting additional funds to the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR). The modification will allow NORC to fully implement the Web survey mode for the 2006 SDR data collection, increase the sample size for the 2006 survey, and add a new panel of international doctorate recipients. NSF has asked NORC to complete several new analytic tasks including the writing and publication of three information briefs and a series of tables for the Science and Engineering Indicators 2008 report. Karen Grigorian is the SDR Project Director. The web site is: <http://www.norc.org/issues/edudev5.asp>. Tom Hoffer is the Principal Investigator of the Doctorate Data project. Reach him at hoffer-tom@norc.uchicago.edu.

National Immunization Survey (NIS) Diversifies.

NORC will conduct three new surveys for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which recently changed the focus of its National Immunization Survey (NIS) to include immunization data on teens and adults. The NIS collects quarterly data on immunization information for children ages 19 to 35 months. The random-digit dial (RDD) survey identifies households with eligible children, interviews parents/guardians of the eligible children to collect immunization data, and conducts a provider record check to verify the immunization history. This information is used to produce timely estimates of coverage rates for all childhood vaccinations.

The new NIS Teen Survey will screen households for the presence of 13-17 year olds, conduct 5,000 telephone interviews, and collect immunization histories from health care providers which will produce immunization coverage estimates at the national level. For the new NIS Adult Survey, NORC will develop a questionnaire, conduct cognitive interviews, and implement the data collection with a sample of adults aged 18 years and older. The Immunization Information Systems (IIS) Research Project will design a protocol and conduct feasibility tests to evaluate how the state and local immunization registries can be used jointly for national and local coverage estimates. Contact Missy Koppelman at koppelman-missy@norc.org.

Indian Trust Accounts

The U.S. Department of Interior has expanded the work of a team of statisticians, led by NORC Senior Fellow Fritz Scheuren and Senior Statistician Susan Hinkins, providing support to the Office of Historical Trust Accounting as it undertakes a comprehensive and accurate accounting of the funds that it has managed for many years on behalf of Native American tribes and individual Native Americans. The large volume of records involved, and the many types of financial transactions they detail, have made it highly desirable that strategies to permit record sampling and estimation be devised as an alternative to reviewing each individual record. NORC's talented team--composed of staff members and consultants--works closely with government staff members and other accountants. Contact Fritz Scheuren at scheuren-fritz@norc.org or Rachel Harter at harter-rachel@norc.org for more information.

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)

The New York Times

[September 15, 2006 – CDC Says Black-White Vaccine Gap is Gone](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released 2005 data on childhood vaccination rates on September 15. The 2005 data is the first collected by NORC for the client as part of the National Immunization Survey (NIS), NORC's largest project. See the CDC's [press release](#).

n p r ONLINE

[September 13, 2006 – Dynamic Economy Produces High-paying Jobs](#)

National Public Radio interviewed NORC's Julia Lane about her book, *Economic Turbulence*, published this week by the University of Chicago Press. Listen to the [interview](#), see the [press release](#) and watch the [webcast](#).

USA TODAY

[September 12, 2006 – Secular or Unaffiliated: Findings Escalate Debate](#)

USA Today quoted NORC Senior Research Scientist and co-director of the General Social Survey (GSS) Tom W. Smith in a story about a Baylor University study on whether survey respondents who claim no religious affiliation are truly not religious or whether they simply do not belong to a specific religious denomination. The GSS data from 2004 reveals that 13.8 percent of Americans claim no religion.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

[August 25, 2006 - PhD-Producing Universities.](#)

The Chronicle of Higher Education's August 25, 2006 issue uses Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) data in a table listing Characteristics of Recipients of Earned Doctorates (p. 20) and a table listing Universities Awarding the Most Earned Doctorates (p. 22).

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

[August 4, 2006 – Role of Graduate Education](#)

Findings from the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) are cited in an August 4 story in the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) about the changing role of graduate education. The SED is conducted annually by NORC on behalf of the National Science Foundation. The survey collects information about graduates' educational histories, funding sources, and postdoctoral plans.

NORC conducts scientific surveys for its clients on a wide variety of topics, some of which involve sensitive and controversial issues. NORC does not advocate specific positions or points of view on political issues but, rather, seeks to be a source of reliable and accurate information for government policy makers, the public, the media, and others interested in important social issues.

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