

# **Government Statistics Section - Social Statistics Section**

## **Newsletter**

### **Spring 1995**

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**Joint Statistical Meetings**

**Government Statistical Section**

## **Social Statistical Section**

**August 13-17, 1995**

**Orlando, Florida**

### **Program Highlights**

**Both the Government and Social Statistics Sessions have strong programs for the 1995 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM). Remember that this year's annual meeting begins on Sunday, August 13, at 4 pm, so be sure to keep this in mind when you make your travel plans. Reports from the program chairs follow. A detailed listing of the sessions is provided as an insert to this newsletter.**

### **Government Statistics Session**

**GSS has three invited sessions, ten special contributed sessions, three contributed papers sessions, and five luncheon roundtables. In addition, GSS is the primary ASA section co-sponsoring invited sessions from two outside organizations. Many of these GSS-sponsored sessions are attuned to the theme of the Joint Statistical Meetings, "Statistics in Action," (See insert for calendar of all GSS-sponsored events.)**

#### **Invited Sessions**

**Sunday, August 13, 4 pm**

**Our first invited session is entitled Review of the "Federal Race and Ethnicity Classification." The categories currently in use are contained in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistical and Administrative Reporting, adopted in 1977. During the past few years, these standards have been criticized for not reflecting the diversity of our Nation's population. The first two papers in this invited session present overviews of this review:**

**Suzann Evinger, OMB, will discuss the rationale behind the review. Clyde Tucker, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), will outline the research agenda on issues surrounding the definition of racial and ethnic categories. A third paper, by Manuel de la Puente, Census Bureau, will summarize the results from a study using the Current Population Survey Supplement. Reynolds Farley, University of Michigan, will discuss these papers.**

**Monday, August 14, 2 pm**

**GSS's second invited session, organized by Connie Citro, features the report of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council's (NAS-NRC) Panel on Poverty and Family Assistance. Robert Michael, panel chair, will summarize conclusions and findings of the report. Connie has lined up an excellent group of discussants- Nancy Gordon, Congressional Budget Office (CBO), Daniel Weinberg, Census Bureau, and Harold Watts, Columbia University- for her session. The report recommends substantial changes in the definition of poverty and how it is measured. We are fortunate that the JSM will be one of the first public forums for presenting the results of this important study. It promises to be a lively and informative session, especially given the interests of the current Congress. (See related special contributed sessions.)**

#### **Short descriptions of the program**

**Tuesday, August 15, 10:30 am**

**Memorial session in honor of Roger Herriot. Before his untimely death, Roger was Associate Commissioner for Statistical Standards and Methodology at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Before that, he worked at the Census Bureau in a variety of different jobs. Roger was a creative individual who used**

an innovative approach to try to improve the ways and methods of the federal statistical system. Therefore, it is fitting that his memorial session is entitled "Overcoming the Bureaucratic Paradigm." This session was organized by Daniel Kasprzyk, NCES, and Fritz Scheuren, George Washington University. It features William Butz, Census Bureau, and Leslie Kish, University of Michigan, as the speakers. Timothy Smeeding, Syracuse University, and Clifford Clogg, Pennsylvania State University, will be the discussants. (GSS is one of the sponsors of the Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. The first Herriot Award will be presented at the memorial session.)

GSS is primary section sponsor for invited sessions of two outside organizations. Both of these invited sessions will be on:

Wednesday, August 16.

8:30 am

The Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics' (COPAFS) invited session, "Moving the Federal Statistical System into the 21st century." Richard Rockwell, University of Michigan, will provide an overview of the issues as he sees them. Miron Straf, NAS-NRC's Committee on National Statistics, will talk about the new roles, responsibilities, and relationships of statistical agencies in the 21st century. Robert Groves, University of Maryland-University of Michigan Joint Program in Survey Methodology, will focus on the roles of the government statistician in the 21st century. Edward Spar, COPAFS, will discuss implications for users of federal statistical data.

2:00 pm

Mary Batcher has organized an invited session on behalf of the Caucus for Women in Statistics entitled "Quality Improvement and Customer Satisfaction in the Federal Government." The session describes the responses of three agencies to Vice-President Gore's National Performance Review. The agencies represented are BLS, NCES, and the Internal Revenue Service. Speakers will be Catherine Kazanowski, Carol Kindel, and Jeri Mulrow, respectively.

#### Special Contributed Sessions

GSS's ten special contributed sessions cover a wide variety of topics relevant to the GSS membership. On behalf of GSS's executive committee, the GSS program committee extends a hearty "thank you" to those who arranged this rich set of sessions.

#### n Poverty Estimates

Two special contributed sessions are concerned with poverty estimates. John Coder, Census Bureau, has organized a session on the use of census income and poverty estimates at the state and county level. A session organized by Leslie Christovich, U.S. Food and Nutrition Service, will examine the use of selection bias in evaluating federal poverty programs.

#### n Statistical Data

Several GSS special contributed sessions focus on specific types of statistical data. Leonard Gaines, New York State Department of Economic Development, has organized a session concerning the needs of non-federal data users for the 2000 Census. Robert Klein, Department of Veterans Affairs, has organized a session on research topics of import to his department. Last, but not least, there will be a session on methodological innovations and improvements in four federal transportation surveys (two from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one from the Energy Information Administration, and one from the Federal Highway Administration.)

## **n Privacy and Confidentiality**

Two special contributed sessions concern privacy and confidentiality issues. N. Clyde Tucker of BLS has organized a paper session entitled "Emerging Privacy and Confidentiality Issues." A panel organized by Ginny de Wolf will discuss the 1995 effort to broaden legal authority to share confidential microdata and will focus on business and economic data.

## **n Cross-Cutting Sessions**

The remaining special contributed sessions cut across agency boundaries. Staff development in federal statistical agencies is the focus of the session organized by Ruth Ann Killion, Census Bureau. Robert Kominski, Census Bureau, has organized a panel discussion on the information highway and federal agencies' efforts for the Internet. Denise Myers, National Agricultural Statistics Service, has put together a session on the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology and its contributions over the past twenty years.

## **Non-lunch Roundtable**

This year GSS will sponsor one non-lunch roundtable discussion group, held on Wednesday, August 16 at 8:30 am. (This format was introduced at the 1994 JSM. Non-lunch roundtables do not require pre-registration. No food will be served.) Thomas Brundage, The Logical Connection, and Leonard Gaines, NY State Department of Economic Development, will lead a discussion group that focuses on the role of state and local statisticians in the ASA.

## **Luncheon Roundtables**

The GSS has five luncheon roundtables scheduled for Wednesday, August 16.

### **n "Reinventing Government"**

Two of these roundtables were inspired by governmental efforts to "reinvent government." Katherine K. Wallman, OMB, will bring participants up to date on the latest information on the likely impact of these efforts on federal statistical agencies and will lead a discussion of possible alternative responses from the federal statistical community. Lynda Carlson, Energy Information Administration, will lead a discussion on customer surveys in data collection and dissemination organizations.

### **n Data Collection**

Three other luncheon roundtables examine topics related to data collection. Don Dillman, Washington State University, will challenge government and other survey organizations to rethink their avoidance of financial incentives in mail surveys. Judith Rowe, Princeton University, and Harvey Schwartz, Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, will discuss privacy and confidentiality issues related to government and commercial data bases, including an update on new federal legislation. Pat Doyle, Agency for Health Care Policy and Research and Chair of the Association of Public Data Users Committee on Modernizing Data Documentation, will address the question of how data providers can make CAPI and CATI documentation more useful and user friendly.

The GSS program committee is very excited about the roundtables it has organized and urges all members to make luncheon reservations early to ensure a seat.

The remainder of GSS's program consists of three regular contributed paper sessions on topics of interest to our members.

Finally, be sure to attend the GSS business meeting on Wednesday, August 16, from 5:00 to 6:00 pm.

**See you all in Orlando!!**

### **Social Statistics Session**

**The Social Statistics Session (SSS) has a full program of exciting sessions in Orlando. They include sessions on decennial census planning and tests, the role of statistics in health care policy formulation, discussions of statistics on minority populations, and examination of microsimulation modeling. Linked with sessions from other sections, particularly GSS, we see an exciting five days of discussion of contemporary statistical issues in Orlando.**

**The program also includes seven luncheon roundtable discussions on Monday, August 14, and four "statistical applications" sessions broadly focused on themes of concern to members. The topics include education, health care, demography, and general survey practice. (See insert for calendar of all SSS-sponsored events.)**

### **Invited Sessions**

**SSS will sponsor four invited sessions at this year's JSM.**

**Monday, August 14, 10:30 am**

**Our first invited session, 1995 Census Tests and Their Implications for the 2000 Census, was organized by Barry Edmonston and Constance Citro. The featured speakers are: Susan Miskura and John Thompson; discussants are: Stephen Fienberg and Jeffrey Passel.**

**Tuesday, August 15,**

**8:30 am**

**Wendy Alvey organized our second invited session, entitled Record Linkage Applications for Health Care Policy. The session chair, Manning Feinleib, will preside over lively presentations featuring Martha Fair, Harvey Schwartz, Randall Spoeri, and Fritz Scheuren.**

**2:00 pm**

**Collecting Survey Data on Minority Populations: What Do We Know or Do We Know What We Really Have? is the subject of our third invited session, organized by Patricia Golden, and chaired by Robert Santos. Patricia Golden, Timothy Johnson, and Carol D'Onofrio are the featured speakers.**

**Wednesday, August 16, 2:00 pm**

**Our final invited session was organized by B.K. Atrostic, and is chaired by Nancy Gordon. Sheila Zedlewski, William Trautman, B.K. Atrostic, Len Nichols, and Donna Pavetti will discuss Improving the Quality of Information for Government Decision-Making: The Role of Microsimulation Modeling.**

### **Contributed Sessions**

**SSS is also sponsoring four contributed sessions.**

**Monday, August 14, 2:00 pm**

The first contributed session, Survey Innovation and Research Practice, will be chaired by Edith McArthur, will feature Yasuo Amemiya, Judith Eargle, David Nichols, Charles Mason, and Mary Schmidt as speakers.

**Tuesday, August 15, 4:00 pm**

The second contributed session will be chaired by Daniel Weinberg. Its subject is Statistical Applications in Demography. Speakers will be Edward Ng, Miquel Arino, Balkrishna Kale, and Mack Shelley.

**Wednesday, August 16, 2:00 pm**

Statistical Applications for Health Care Policy, chaired by Pat Doyle, will feature Lori Thombs, Edith Zang, Edward Norton, James Boyle, Mary-Lynn Brecht, and Ayah Johnson as speakers.

**Thursday, August 17, 8:30 am**

Finally, our last contributed session, Statistical Applications for Education Policy, will be chaired by Susan Miskura. It will feature Richard Ingersoll, J. Michael Hardin, Edith McArthur, Jerry West, and George Michailidis.

#### **Special Contributed Sessions**

SSS will sponsor two special contributed sessions at this year's JSM. One examines census books and statistical innovation, while the other looks at multiple imputation.

**Tuesday, August 15, 10:30 am**

Margo Anderson organized a special contributed session on Census Books and Statistical Innovation: The Authors and the Critics. Speakers will be Barbara Bryant, Harvey Cholodin, Constance Citro, and Linda Gage.

**Wednesday, August 16, 8:30 am**

Chaired by Joseph Schafer, our second special contributed session looks at Multiple Imputation: Microsimulation and Other Applications. The session was organized by Nancy Gordon, and will feature Fritz Scheuren, Alan Zaslavsky, Pat Doyle, B.K. Atrostic and Arthur Kennickell.

#### **Luncheon Roundtables**

Seven luncheon roundtables are sponsored by SSS. All will be held on Monday, August 14, at 12:30 pm. Constance Citro will lead a discussion on Measuring Poverty. Jon Czajka will guide a dialogue on Policy Analysis in the Era of Block Grants. Suzann Evinger will facilitate an exchange on Reconsidering Standards for Racial and Ethnic Data. Martha F. Riche will lead a discussion on Reengineering the Decennial Census. Margo Anderson's roundtable will focus on Statistics and Politics. Joseph Salvo will expedite a conversation on Year 2000 Census Content, and Geoffrey Hole will lead a discussion on Administrative Data to Complement/Supplement Data from Household Surveys.

#### **Messages from the Chairs**

#### **News and Happenings**

**SSS: Daniel Weinberg**

Expecting to have a year in which to learn my new job, I was rudely shaken by Marty Riche's decision last November to resign as Chair-Elect of the Social Statistics Section to take the much less demanding job as Director of the Census Bureau. By the by-laws, that makes me chair for both 1995 and 1996! (Congratulations, condolences, and any other messages can be conveyed to me at the address given at the end of this newsletter.) It will take me a while to catch on, so please be patient.

As our first activity, we have taken survey results to heart and have begun a section newsletter. Actually, we've "piggybacked" on the Government Statistics Section newsletter with their kind permission. The Executive Committee is looking for other ways to coordinate the activities of the two sections, since so many of our interests overlap. David Cantor, the Publications Chair, is looking for a newsletter editor, so if you are interested or know of someone who would be, please contact him at the address given below.

As you can see by the article from Margo Anderson, we have an exciting set of sessions planned for the August JSM in Orlando, including some interesting roundtables planned by the incoming Program Chair, Sue Miskura.

The Council of Sections has voted to help ASA establish an Internet link. The Executive Committee has voted to contribute \$750 to that effort this year only. We are looking for someone who is interested in being the Section's link to the steering committee for that effort. Contact me if you're interested.

We are also planning on establishing a standing committee of three to nominate ASA Fellows from our Section. More on that later.

#### The New Federalism and Government Statistics

GSS: Robert Lehen

The 1994 congressional elections have already produced significant changes in how the Nation thinks about what government does and who should do it. These changes are much more profound than making Congress "live by the same laws as others" or structural changes, such as term limits and the balanced budget amendment. These changes affect the very nature of our federal system of government.

The January-March 1995 issue of "News from COPAFS" (Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics) notes that federal statistical agencies will not be immune from across the board budget cuts and that round two of the Re-Inventing Government initiative (REGO II) will consider a proposal to consolidate some federal statistical agencies having collective budgets totaling \$1 billion. From my vantage point at the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs, these proposals are only part of much broader changes that will have direct impacts on government employees working with statistics at both the federal and state levels.

The more profound changes I see coming are the shift of responsibilities and budgets to the state level. Just one example being discussed in Washington illustrates my observation: the proposal to close-down the U.S. Department of Education and transfer its responsibilities to the states. Although one proposal that I have seen proposes to put the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Bureau of the Census, the question still remains whether the currently strong federal role in education statistics will continue or whether state departments of education will be expected to expand their statistical activities to maintain the quality of education statistics. If this occurs, it will be a major shift in responsibility. Proposals to move welfare and social services to the states also raise important questions about the expanding role of the states in the collection, analysis, and reporting of government statistics.

What does this discussion have to do with the Government Statistics Section? Plenty, I think. GSS was organized to promote the quality and usefulness of government statistics at all levels of government. Since its inception, GSS has sought to reach people involved in government statistics to represent their concerns and serve their professional needs.

Let GSS know of your professional needs and how the section may best serve you. Become involved in GSS, by attending the GSS business meeting on August 16 from 5 to 6 pm at the annual meeting in Orlando. If you can not attend the annual meeting, write a note or send an e-mail message to me or one of the section officers. Their names, addresses, and e-mail addresses are provided at the end of this newsletter. In my next column, I will report on what you have said. Keep in touch.

## ARTICLES

### What's Metropolitan

#### It's That Time of Decade Again

Edward J. Spar

As we move rapidly toward the year 2000 (for those of you who know me, that grey hair is all too real), the question is how widespread is the use of metropolitan areas on the part of the business community? With the availability of demographic, socio-economic, and industrial data at the smallest levels of geography, how many in the private sector care about these relatively large areas? Are they still important for determining sales territories? Is there still a strong relationship between metropolitan areas and television and radio markets? Do companies still use metropolitan areas as one level of geography for evaluating new sites for outlets, or for determining the site for an entire manufacturing facility? Although all the mapping packages have coordinates available for metropolitan areas, does anyone use them?

For federal, state, and local government agencies, metropolitan areas are still very important. For example, the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) uses the metropolitan area designation to channel special funding to hospitals. The National Agricultural Statistical Service also uses the metropolitan/non-metropolitan designation in their funding decisions. At the local level, farmers may lose certain funding if their county becomes metropolitan. I am not familiar with any study that shows how many federal programs are tied to these areas, but I've no doubt billions of dollars are allocated based upon the designation. However, ironically, the OMB did not design the designation to be used in the allocation of funds. Indeed, OMB has always held that the areas' purpose is to achieve consistency throughout the federal system. The metropolitan area designation sets up standards, not regulations.

First defined prior to the 1950 Census, the metropolitan area standards have been revised several times since their adoption. The most dramatic change occurred prior to the 1980 Census with the advent of hierarchical areas. To this day, I am convinced that primary metropolitan areas are really secondary, and plain old metropolitan areas are really primary. (You all understood that, of course.) The hierarchical structure gave rise to many debates regarding whether the consolidated area of New York (population 19 million) should be ranked in the same table with Sheboygan (population 106,000).

The central question at issue now is whether these revisions have enabled metropolitan areas to remain an effective classification. Do evolving settlement patterns, changes in data use, and technical opportunities indicate changes in approach for the 21st century? Under the current standards, qualification as a metropolitan area requires that there must be a population concentration of at least 50,000. If an area does not contain a city that large, it must have an urbanized area and a total population of 100,000. The extent of a metropolitan area depends upon commuting patterns based upon journey-to-work data from the decennial census.

COPAFS is sponsoring a two-day conference to address these issues. (See the Announcements section of this newsletter for details.) Whether or not you attend the conference, your input on the questions raised here would be greatly appreciated.

### Privacy and the National Information Infrastructure



**Jerry Gates**

Government survey takers are increasingly interested in making use of new technologies to collect and distribute information. They are not alone. Many government and private sector organizations realize that the new information infrastructure, being built by the private sector, is a valuable and cost-effective way to communicate and to conduct business. The Clinton Administration is committed to developing the national information infrastructure (NII) and to getting the American people connected to it. In the process, the Administration is exploring difficult social, ethical, commercial, and politically-sensitive issues, such as copyright protection, security, equal access, and privacy.

The Administration's Information Infrastructure Task Force has a Policy Committee headed by Sally Katzen of OMB. The Privacy Working Group, within this Committee, began looking at privacy issues related to networked computers in the summer of 1993. First, the group evaluated the need for new Fair Information Principles to guide NII participants. After reviewing existing standards, including the 1973 HEW Code of Fair Information Practices, interviewing fifty experts in privacy, data protection, and telecommunications technology, and holding two public hearings, the Working Group drafted its Principles for Providing and Using Personal Information. These principles have undergone two rounds of public comment and are being revised for final release in the summer of 1995.

What does this mean for the government statistician? Perhaps a great deal. The new principles will set broad limits by which personal information should be collected and used. They are divided into three categories.: (1) general principles for all participants; (2) principles for users of personal information; and (3) principles for providers of personal information.

The individual principles are designed to be applied across many sectors of government and industry. They are not adequate to address all issues within each sector, but are intended to be the basis from which sectoral principles may be crafted. Although statistical associations like ASA and ISI have developed ethical guidelines for statisticians, they may not be appropriate for supporting the Working Group's new principles. New Fair Information Principles for Statistics may be needed to ensure that survey and census takers are fully aware of how technology affects individual privacy. Fortunately, the Council of Europe's Project Group on Data Protection has recently completed an exercise to produce Draft Recommendations on the Protection of Personal Data Collected and Processed for Statistical Purposes, which should serve as a valuable starting point for U.S. statisticians.

The Privacy Working Group will next report on the advisability of creating a privacy body in the U.S. to oversee the application of its Principles and to address privacy concerns in general. This analysis is underway, and the a report to the Task Force will be made later in the summer of 1995.

If you are interested in learning more about the Information Infrastructure Task Force Working Group Principles or the Council of Europe's Recommendations, please contact Jerry Gates.

## **Revising the Poverty Measure**

**Constance Citro**

The Committee on National Statistics' Panel on Poverty and Family Assistance has recommended that the U.S. measure of poverty be revised. The current measure is outmoded and is no longer able to provide adequate guidance for policy. The panel's report, *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach*, released in early May, recommends a revised concept on which to develop and update the poverty thresholds and a revised definition of families' incomes for comparison with the thresholds to determine poverty status.

The Panel on Poverty and Family Assistance was chaired by Robert T. Michael, Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, University of Chicago. Constance F. Citro served as study director. Several ASA members served on the 13-person panel, including Robert M. Hauser and Franklin D. Wilson.

The current official measure of poverty compares families' before-tax money income to a set of after-tax thresholds that were originally developed by Mollie Orshansky for 1963. The thresholds were based on the cost of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economy Food Plan times three to allow for all other needed spending and were adjusted for various family characteristics. Since that time, the thresholds have been kept constant in real dollar terms (i.e., they have been updated only for price inflation).

The CNSTAT panel recommends for purposes of poverty measurement that income be defined as disposable money and near-money income. This definition starts with gross money income; adds the value of such near-money benefits as food stamps, school lunches, and public housing that support basic consumption needs; and subtracts expenses that are not available for basic needs. These expenses include income and payroll taxes; child care, transportation, and other work-related expenses; child support payments to another household; and out-of-pocket medical care expenses, including health insurance premiums. The panel recommends that the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) be used instead of the March Current Population Survey (CPS) to measure families' incomes and to produce poverty statistics.

The panel recommends that a poverty threshold for a reference two-adult/two-child family be developed from consumer expenditure data on amounts spent for three basic needs—food, clothing, and shelter, including utilities—plus a small added amount for other needed expenditures (not including those deducted from income). The panel recommends the use of an equivalence scale to adjust the reference family threshold for other family types and the use of a housing cost index to adjust the thresholds for differences in the cost of housing by region and size of metropolitan area. Finally, the panel recommends that the thresholds be updated each year for real changes in consumption of food, clothing, and shelter.

The panel implemented its proposed measure with data from the March 1993 CPS, augmented with data from SIPP and other sources. The proposed measure's 18 results paint a different picture of poverty than those gained by use of the current measure. The proposed measure shows a larger share of the poverty population in working families and in families lacking health insurance and a smaller share of the poverty population in families receiving public assistance. In general, the proposed poverty measure reflects the impact of important social and economic changes (e.g., the increase in the number of working families with child care costs) and changes in public policy (e.g., tax policy changes and the growth in noncash benefit programs), which the current measure cannot capture.

In addition to proposing an improved poverty measure for official U.S. government use, the panel recommends that the U.S. Office of Management and Budget review the poverty measure every 10 years to determine further improvements that can be made with regard to concepts, measurement methods, and data sources.

Copies of the 519 page volume may be ordered for \$36.00 (this price reflects a 20 percent discount for association members) plus shipping and handling from the National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Lockbox 285, Washington, D.C. 20055. To order by phone using VISA/MasterCard/American Express, call toll free 1-800-624-6242, or 202-334-3313 in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Please request the discount when ordering.

Association members may also request compiled of the report summary, which are available free of charge. To obtain a copy, please contact Agnes Gaskin via e-mail at AGASKIN@NAS.EDU or at the Committee on National Statistics, 2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418 (202-334-2240).

## Recent Surveys

### NCHS

The Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey was recently completed. It produced landmark data on key indicators of the Nation's health. New estimates of cholesterol and blood lead levels, dietary fats, overweight, and hypertension have been released.

The National Health Care Survey has now fielded all of the component surveys monitoring health care in America. Surveys of ambulatory surgery, home health and hospice care, and emergency and outpatient departments are now in place along with surveys of inpatient, nursing home, and ambulatory care.

Two new surveys, the National Employers Health Insurance Survey and the State and Local Immunization Coverage and Health Survey have been released. The first was developed and fielded to analyze employer-provided health insurance benefits and choices and to produce national and state health accounts. The second monitors the level at which children aged 19 to 35 months are receiving immunizations as part of the Nation's childhood immunization initiative.

## **DoD**

### **Youth Attitude Tracking Study**

The Defense Manpower Data Center has recently completed a study of youth interest in the military. Since 1975, DoD has conducted the Youth Attitude Tracking Study annually. This study provides information on the propensity, attitudes, and motivations of young people toward military service. Research has shown that the expressed intentions of young men and women are strong predictors of enlistment behavior. Findings indicate that the active-duty propensity of men aged 16 to 21 continues to decline, especially for African-Americans, while the propensity of other groups toward military service appears to have stabilized. For further information, contact Jerry Lehnus (703) 696-4086.

### **Annual Survey of Federal Executives**

Each year, the Federal Executive Institute Alumni Association (FEIAA) conducts a survey of its membership. Membership in the Senior Executive Service or General Schedule-15 status is required to attend the Institute; hence, all members of the Association are senior Federal executives or managers.

The survey covers respondents' sociodemographic and employment characteristics; attitudes toward the Federal service and current policies that affect agency performance; assessment of issues facing their agencies; projected longevity in the Federal service; and, for retirees, most recent employment characteristics and reasons for retirement.

The 1994 survey was mailed to a population of 2,700 Association members, of which 1,186 responded. Major results show that morale is low among Federal executives; that reinvention of government and downsizing are factors in that low morale; and that executives rely on peers and subordinates for social support.

Further information about the survey may be obtained from Dr. Ronald Manderscheid, U.S. Center for Mental Health Services, Rm 15C-O4, Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857; tel. (301) 443- 3343.

## **Announcements**

### **Conferences**

NCHS is sponsoring the first annual Summer Minority Public Health Institute at the University of North Carolina School of Public Health, June 18-23, 1995. The Institute is designed to improve research methods, decision making, policy development, and planning for minority health. It is open to researchers, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and professionals in federal and local agencies and community organizations. Please call (301) 436-7142 for more information.

The 1995 Public Health Conference on Records and Statistics, "Data Needs in an Era of Health Reform," is scheduled for July 17-20, 1995 in Washington D.C. This year's conference is being held in conjunction with a

two-day symposium in recognition of the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics' 45th anniversary. For more information, please call (301) 436-7122.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is considering new ways of defining metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. On November 29 and 30, 1995, COPAFS will host a conference on metropolitan area concepts. The purpose of this conference is to provide a forum for evaluating alternative definition approaches, and for OMB to hear the concerns of the user community. Following the conference, OMB will begin work on developing the standards that will be used to define areas with 2000 Census data. If these areas are important to you, the conference is your opportunity to have input into the process. The cost for the two-day seminar, to be held at the Holiday Inn, Bethesda, Maryland, will be \$125 per person. Registration is limited to 250 participants. For further information, contact Edward J. Spar or Susan Cohen in the COPAFS office at (703) 836-0404. We look forward to seeing you there.

#### **New Director Sought for National Center for Health Statistics**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has instituted a nationwide search for a new Director for NCHS. The position has been advertised widely and the announcement for the Senior Executive Service vacancy will close on July 31, 1995. For information on applying for ES-94-3, please call Nancy E. Peterson, (404) 639-3614.

#### **Norwood, Janet. Organizing to Count: Change in the Federal Statistical System.**

The Urban Institute Press has recently published a book by Janet E. Norwood, former Commissioner of Labor Statistics, that documents a history of public and governmental inattention to the federal statistical system. As a consequence of this neglect, we have lost our position as a world statistical leader. The volume presents policy recommendations, ranging from structural to legislative, that would make the United States statistical system competitive once again.

#### **NAEP Reading Report Released**

The National Center for Education Statistics has released the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading: A First Look. The report highlights reading proficiency of 4th, 8th, and 12th graders nationally, and gives average scores for 4th graders in 41 participating states and jurisdictions. The full NAEP Reading Report Card, containing additional findings on factors contributing to academic achievement, will be released later this year. Copies are available from New Orders, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Refer to stock number 065-000-00756-8; the price is \$4.75. Fax credit card orders to 202-512-2250.

#### **NHIS Redesign Planned**

NCHS's National Health Interview Survey, a major source of information on the health of Americans, is undergoing an extensive redesign. In operation since 1957, the NHIS provides current and trend data to describe the extent of illness and disability; use of health services; health care coverage; and health habits, knowledge, and attitudes of the U.S. population. As the largest population-based health survey, the NHIS collects data on many of the Nation's critical public health issues and works in close collaboration with other agencies to develop its content and scope.

The goal of the NHIS redesign is to improve its capacity to provide data on all aspects of health required for monitoring research and policy purposes. The survey redesign updates content to meet current data needs, includes additional aspects of health, reduces respondent burden, and employs state-of-the-art questionnaire development. It will be administered through computer-assisted personal interviewing. This will facilitate data processing and analysis and will improve speed and access to data. The redesign will also enhance linkages with other data systems and surveys. It will be implemented in January 1996.

## **ASA Recruiting Planned**

**The American Statistical Association's (ASA) Individual Membership Subcommittee expects to submit a plan for recruiting state and local government statisticians as ASA members to the Association's Board of Directors following the JSM. It is hoped that the recommendations will be considered and approved at the Board's December, 1995 meeting.**

**The plan is the culmination of several years' effort by members of the GSS, the ASA Board, and the Subcommittee. Particular activities contributing to the development of the plan are: (1) a survey of state and local government statisticians in three states sponsored by GSS; (2) a request from the ASA Board that the Committee on Membership study the question of recruiting state and local government statisticians; (3) the appointment of several state government statisticians to the Committee on Membership; (4) a panel discussion at the 1992 JSM in Boston; (5) the circulation of a draft paper describing the needs of t**