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To:
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Subject: Update - Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy

FYI - here's a brief Coalition update, which we recently sent our Advisory Board. Any thoughts or suggestions would be appreciated.

Jon

To: Board of Advisors of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy (distribution list below)
From: Jon Baron

We're pleased to report major new progress in our work to advance federal evidence-based policy reform:

- 1. New guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and White House to the federal departments and agencies – *Next Steps in the Evidence and Innovation Agenda* – signals an intensified push for evidence-based reform across the federal government.** The high-profile guidance – signed jointly by the Directors of OMB, White House Domestic Policy Council, and White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the Chair of the President's Council of Economic Advisers – incorporates many of the evidence-based concepts we have advanced through our work with federal officials (e.g., cites our work on low-cost randomized controlled trials). The guidance applies to agency budget submissions for the President's FY 2015 budget, and therefore is likely to have an important influence on funding and program decisions across the broad range of federal agencies and program areas.

The following excerpts illustrate the guidance's general approach:

- *"Agency [budget] requests are more likely to be fully funded if they show a widespread commitment to evidence and innovation."*
 - To advance the use of existing evidence: *"Major new policy proposals, and agency performance plans, should be accompanied by a thorough discussion of existing evidence, both positive and negative, on the effectiveness of those proposals ... with a preference for high quality experimental and quasi-experimental studies."*
 - To advance the development of new evidence: *"In their budget requests, agencies are also encouraged to include new proposals for developing evidence that ... [1] address important policy questions and generate evidence that could be actionable ... [2] will yield credible evidence of program or policy impacts, for example by utilizing randomized controlled trials or carefully designed quasi-experimental techniques ... and [3] will help agencies direct a larger share of resources towards evidence-based practices."*
 - Next steps: The memo describes concrete strategies that agencies might include in their budget submissions to advance the above goals, and announces a new interagency collaboration process and series of workshops designed to build and share knowledge about evidence-based-approaches across the government.
- 2. The FY 2014 Labor-HHS-Education spending bill, passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee in July, provides exceptionally strong support for evidence-based reform.** For example, despite the tight budget environment, the bill includes a \$40 million (11%) increase in funding for the "tiered evidence" initiatives at these agencies – such as the Department of Education's Investing in Innovation Fund – which make building and using evidence of effectiveness a central criterion in the grant selection process. The bill also includes a new 0.5% evaluation set-aside at the Department of Labor, which we estimate will generate approximately \$50 million in additional funding for program evaluation efforts. While these actions are very encouraging, the House Appropriations Committee has not yet released its corresponding spending bill, and the path forward to enactment of all FY 2014 spending bills is uncertain in the current political climate.
 - 3. I recently testified before Congress on behalf of the Coalition, addressing the following issues:**
 - **Increasing the Effectiveness of Social Spending While Reducing Its Cost: An Evidence-Based Approach**, [Testimony](#) before the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, July 17, 2013
 - **A Different Way Forward in the War on Poverty, Based on Credible Evidence About "What Works"**, [Testimony](#) before the House Budget Committee, July 31, 2013

We hope this update is helpful. Any thoughts or suggestions you have on our work would be much appreciated.

Jon

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Please visit the Coalition's [Help Desk](#), providing impartial expert advice. We also offer an [open online workshop](#) in evidence-based reform (optional accompanying phone sessions providing hands-on experience will be offered next in late September – contact [Allison Taylor](#), 202-713-9553).

The Coalition is grateful to the MacArthur Foundation, William T. Grant Foundation, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, and Hewlett Foundation for their funding support for our work in this area. If you do not wish to receive Coalition updates, please click here to [unsubscribe](#). If you are not the direct recipient of this email and wish to receive our updates, please click here to [subscribe](#).