

Barbara Entwisle, Ph.D.
President
Population Association of America

Michael White, Ph.D.
President
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Dear Drs. Entwisle and White:

Thank you for your provocative letter asking the NICHD to respond to the question raised by Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee Congressman David Obey. The staff of the NICHD Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch (DBSB) has developed the enclosed short document, which summarizes insights from recent research about likely population trends over the coming decade. The document integrates projections from the Bureau of the Census, statistics from other federal statistical agencies, and DBSB-supported research on population change. Several of your associations' members, including Larry Finer, Jennifer Glick, Charles Hirschman, Robert Hummer, Linda Jacobsen, Ron Lee, Sara McLanahan, Phil Morgan, and Kelly Raley, provided the DBSB with invaluable help in reviewing the document for content and accuracy. I hope you will find it useful.

Your letter also asked for an assessment of future research needs. Last December, the DBSB met with a panel of ten experts to gain advice on future research investments in population research. Many members of the panel belong to the Population Association of America or to centers affiliated with the Association of Population Centers. The Branch's long-range plan, developed with advice from the panel, will be available after it receives final review by the National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council this coming September. Likely candidates for future research priorities include research on population health, family change, and population movement. The need for interdisciplinary science will continue to grow, including science that addresses the spatial dimensions of populations, the psychological processes that contribute to family dynamics, and biological pathways that link social and demographic conditions to health.

NICHD is proud of its long-standing support for population research, and deeply impressed by the outstanding advances made by the field in recent years. We appreciate the many continuing contributions that your associations make improving the health and well-being of the population, both today and in the future.

Sincerely yours,

Duane Alexander, M.D.