

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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APA CALLS FOR CONSIDERATION OF BEST SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE BY CDC, HHS

Guidance reflects pattern of devaluing science, APA asserts

WASHINGTON -- In the wake of news reports about Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other Health and Human Services employees being “banned” from using certain words, the American Psychological Association welcomed statements today by the CDC director indicating the agency remains committed to its public health mission and will continue to base its policies on the best available scientific evidence.

“We in the science community urge the administration to support evidence-based government programs, particularly those that focus on improving life for the most vulnerable Americans, including transgender people, who have some of the highest rates of suicide in the nation. The ability to discuss scientific research and the ways it affects individuals and populations, including those who are marginalized, is necessary to keeping our nation healthy and safe,” said APA CEO Arthur C Evans Jr. “Limiting discussion of these populations will not make them go away, nor will it lessen the need for public health programs and scientific research.”

Evans’s comments were in response to news reports that employees of the CDC and possibly other agencies within HHS were given guidance dissuading them from using seven words or phrases in agency budget documents, specifically: vulnerable, entitlement, diversity, transgender, fetus, evidence-based and science-based. Statements from the CDC indicated that the news coverage misrepresented the intent, which was a tactic to ensure documents would be more likely to be approved by a Republican Congress if certain words were excluded.

“Restricting these key words follows this administration’s disturbing pattern of devaluing science in myriad ways, including limiting its scientists from attending meetings, controlling what its scientists can say to the public, rolling back data collection efforts, and leaving key federal science agency positions unfilled,” said APA President Antonio E. Puente, PhD. “Federal policies and programs affecting public health and science must rest on empirical research. The way we talk about it is critical as it sets the tone for our nation, and affects our ability to use science to make life better for people.”

The American Psychological Association, in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States. APA’s membership includes nearly 115,700 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people’s lives.

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