

CAA Reauthorization, IACC Activities and the GAO Review

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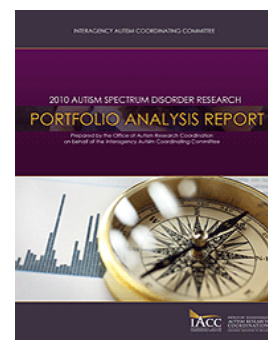
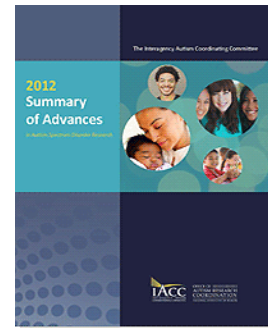
Director, National Institute of Mental Health and Chair, IACC
IACC Full Committee Meeting – January 14, 2014

Combating Autism Act (CAA) of 2006

- Public Law 109-416 enacted in December 2006 reconstituted the IACC with prescribed membership guidelines and responsibilities
- CAA was reauthorized by Public Law Public Law 112-32, the Combating Autism Reauthorization Act (CARA) of 2011 in September 2011, renewing the IACC
- IACC will sunset in September 2014 unless reauthorized by Congress

Responsibilities of the IACC under the CAA

- Develop, annually update and submit to Congress a strategic plan for ASD research
- Provide and annual summary of advances in ASD research
- Monitor Federal activities with respect to ASD
- Make recommendations to the HHS Secretary regarding appropriate changes to Federal activities or public participation in decisions about ASD
- Meet twice a year



Timeline of Events

- September 2011 Reauthorization of Combating Autism Act and renewal of IACC
- 2012- 2013 Multiple reports on the non-replicability of preclinical federally-funded preclinical research
- 2013 Congress requests GAO assessment of duplication in federal ASD research
- September 2014 Sunset of CAA and IACC

November 2013

FEDERAL AUTISM ACTIVITIES

Better Data and More
Coordination Needed
to Help Avoid the
Potential for
Unnecessary
Duplication



What GAO Found

- Eighty-four percent of the autism research projects funded by federal agencies had the potential to be duplicative.
- 1,018 of 1,206 autism research projects funded by federal agencies from fiscal years 2008-2012 were potentially duplicative because the projects were categorized to the same objectives in the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee's (IACC) strategic plan.
- Each agency funded at least 1 autism research project in the same strategic plan objective as another agency. For example, 5 agencies awarded approximately \$15.2 million for 20 autism research projects related to 1 objective to test methods to improve dissemination, implementation, and sustainability of evidence-based interventions, services, and supports in diverse community settings.



What GAO Found - Continued

- The IACC's and federal agencies' efforts to coordinate and monitor federal autism activities were limited.
- The IACC met regularly and issued several reports, such as a strategic plan and portfolio analysis—a report that provides information on autism research projects, organized by the strategic plan objectives. The IACC has also released a companion database to its portfolio analysis.
- However, IACC members provided mixed views on the usefulness of the IACC's meetings, strategic plan, and portfolio analysis in aiding coordination and monitoring.

What GAO Found – continued

- Shortcomings in the data the IACC used for its portfolio analysis limited its ability to coordinate HHS autism activities and monitor federal autism activities. For example, GAO found that the data used by the IACC was outdated, not tracked over time, inconsistent, and incomplete.
- These weaknesses limited the IACC's ability to monitor its progress on its coordination and monitoring efforts. In addition, these weaknesses limited agencies' ability to use these data to identify coordination opportunities and avoid the potential for unnecessary duplication.