Leveraging Public Opinion and Policy to Support Suicide Prevention Research
Public Support Matters

“...public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed.”

Abraham Lincoln
Public Sentiment
Won’t be Denied: HIV/AIDS

NIH funded HIV/AIDS research:
- 1982: $3.35 million
- 1985: $63.7 million
- 1995: $1.34 billion
- 2000: $2.04 billion
- 2005: $2.95 billion
- 2010: $3.01 billion
- 2015 (est.): $3.00 billion

Sources: Federation of American Scientists, NIH RePORT
Public Sentiment Won’t be Denied: Breast Cancer

Breast cancer funding at NCI:
- FY90: $81 million
- FY00: $438.7 million
- FY10: $631.2 million
- FY15(est.): $685 million

Since 1992, the Department of Defense has provided $3.2 billion in breast cancer research funding

Sources: Oncology Times; National Cancer Institute; DoD CDMRP
When Will Public Demand more Mental Health Research?

NIMH funded mental health research:

- 1995: $542 million
- 2000: $973 million
- 2005: $1.41 billion
- 2010: $1.49 billion
- 2015 (est.): $1.46 billion

Sources: NIH RePORT, NIMH
Scientists Can Speed the Day

- Can scientists align to drive public and policymaker support?
- How?
  - Understand public views
  - Use tried-and-true message framing
  - Overcome invisibility
  - Align with high profile champions
  - Work hand in hand with patients and families; those with life experience
  - Demonstrate accountability
Leading Public Champion for Suicide Prevention

“Suicide is a national problem that affects people of all ages, races and ethnic origins. When we compare the incidence of suicide with that of homicide, most people are surprised to learn that suicide is by far the greater killer…”

-- David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D. FAAFP, FACPM, FACP, former U.S. Surgeon General and former CDC Director, in a congressional testimony on suicide awareness and prevention.

Dr. Satcher received Research!America's 2007 Raymond and Beverly Sackler Award for Sustained National Leadership.
Lived Experience: Patient and Policymaker as Advocate

“Let’s start talking about every problem we have in this country in terms of how it can be addressed through improving diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illness and addiction.”

-- former Congressman and Research!America Board Member, Patrick J. Kennedy, author of *A Common Struggle: A Personal Journey through the Past and Future of Mental Health and Addiction.*

“After Roseburg, face up to mental illness, addiction”
Oct. 7, 2015 op-ed in USA Today
Nonprofit alliance with member organizations drawn from academia, business, patient organizations and scientific societies representing more than 125 million Americans

Distinguished, all-volunteer board includes former elected and appointed officials, media and public relations leaders, and leaders from alliance member organizations

Three ‘sister’ organizations in Canada, Australia and Sweden
Our Vision

Achieve national commitment to pursuing medical and health research at the highest level of scientific opportunity in both the public and private sectors, to assure medical progress.
Polls: a Pulse on Public Opinion

- Research!America has commissioned public opinion polls on research issues for 22 years:
  - National Polls
  - State-Based Polls
  - Issue-Specific Polls
- Telephone (random-digit dialing) polls are conducted with a sample size of 800-1000 adults (age 18+) and a maximum theoretical sampling error of +/- 3.5%. Data are demographically representative of adult U.S. residents (state or national)
- Online polls are conducted with a sample size of 1000-2000 adults and sampling error of +/-3.1%. The data are weighted in two stages to ensure accurate representation of the U.S. adult population
Mental Health Rising as National Issue

What would you say is the single most important health issue facing the nation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>August 2012</th>
<th>September 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of health care</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Health Care</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Addiction</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer's disease</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research!America polls of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics and JZ Analytics.
Investment in Mental Health Research Not Enough

Do you think public investment in mental health research is enough, not enough, about right or not sure?

- 54% Not Enough
- 23% Enough
- 13% Not Sure
- 10% About Right

Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in September 2015.
Important to Invest in Suicide Prevention

How important do you think it is for the U.S. to invest public dollars in the prevention of suicide?

- Very Important: 33%
- Somewhat Important: 34%
- Not too Important: 13%
- Not at all Important: 7%
- Not Sure: 13%

Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in September 2015.
### Most Trusted Spokespersons for Science?

How trustworthy do you consider each of the following to be as spokespersons for science?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Very trustworthy</th>
<th>Somewhat trustworthy</th>
<th>Not very trustworthy</th>
<th>Not at all trustworthy</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientists</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care professionals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Patient organizations</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Journalists</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bloggers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business leaders</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected officials</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2014.
Despite High Levels of Public Confidence, Scientists are Invisible in Our Society...
Can Americans Name a Living Scientist?
Most Americans Can’t Name a Living Scientist

Please name a living scientist.

- I can
  - Stephen Hawking: 43%
  - Neil Degrasse Tyson: 6%
  - Bill Nye: 5%
  - Jane Goodall: 5%
  - James Watson: 3%
  - Richard Dawkins: 2%
  - Michio Kaku: 2%
  - Mehmet Oz: 1%
  - Other: 33%

- I cannot

Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics, with support from the American Society of Hematology, in November 2013.
Do Americans Know Where Research is Conducted?
Most Americans Don’t Know Where Research is Conducted

Please name any institution, company or organization where medical or health research is conducted.

- Mayo Clinic: 14%
- Johns Hopkins: 14%
- CDC: 8%
- NIH: 6%
- Pfizer: 4%
- Cleveland Clinic: 3%
- St. Jude’s: 2%
- American Cancer Soc.: 2%
- Harvard University: 2%
- Duke University: 1%
- Eli Lilly: 1%
- Other: 43%

Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics, with support from the American Society of Hematology, in November 2013.
Do Physicians Talk to Patients about Research?
Seven in 10 Say Practitioners Don’t Talk About Medical Research

Has your doctor or other health care professional ever talked to you about medical research?

- Yes: 70%
- No: 8%
- Not sure: 22%

Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2013.
Important for Scientists to Engage with Public on Research

How important is it for scientists to inform elected officials and the public about their research and its impact on society?

Source: A Research!America and ScienceDebate.org poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in September 2015.
Tools you can use: Fact Sheet on Suicide Research

“If you think research is expensive, try disease.”

- Mary Lasker 1901-1994
Put a Face on Research: YOURS!
Remember the most important four words a researcher can say and convey:
“I work for you.”
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