Studies in the News
California Research Bureau, California State Library
August 23, 2017

Contents this week:

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY
Binge drinking may affect up to 30 million Americans

ECONOMY
Two studies draw attention to gender, race differences in the labor force

EDUCATION
A snapshot of needs-based financial aid in the United States

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT
Delta challenges may be with Adaptive Management

HEALTH
Taking antibiotics through its full course may be more harmful

HUMAN SERVICES
Economic security programs have positive long-term impacts on children

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
A guide to the ethics of human genome editing

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
Report outlines critical problems facing very low-income renting families

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2647079

“Americans are drinking more than they used to, a troubling trend with potentially dire implications for the country's future health care costs. The number of adults who binge drink at least once per week could be as high as 30 million, greater than the population of every state save California…. A similar number reported alcohol abuse or dependency. Between the genders, women showed the larger increase in alcohol abuse, according to the report…. While underage drinking has declined in recent years, adult consumption increased across all demographics. The jump also was especially large for older Americans, minorities and people with lower levels of education and income.” (Bloomberg, Aug. 9, 2017).
ECONOMY


“Three economists document systematic differences in the way American men and women participate in the labor force over the course of their lives. They use this evidence to make a persuasive argument: Quantitative economic models that ignore such differences can be poor guides to understanding the impact of government programs such as Social Security on savings and employment.” (Bloomberg. July 27, 2017).


“A team of economists from the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D.C., documents a number of large and persistent differences in labor market outcomes between blacks and non-Hispanic whites in the U.S. Arguably the most important is that blacks -- especially black men -- are much more likely to lose their jobs. This risk of job loss is highly cyclical, which is why blacks fare so much worse than whites during recessions.” (Bloomberg. July 27, 2017).

EDUCATION

http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/PS_Need_Based_Financial_Aid.pdf

This policy snapshot reviews the status of need-based state financial aid for all states. States with gains in need-based state financial aid include Idaho, Alaska, Mississippi and Oregon. States with losses include New Hampshire, Georgia, and Alabama. Twenty states have considered 40 pieces of legislation on this topic in 2017, and of these, six bills made it past one legislative chamber and two have been signed into law. Two California bills concerned with need-based state financial aid—AB227 and AB19—are pending, while AB214 was recently signed into law. Also covered is the five-year percent change in need-based state grant and scholarship programs, 2011-2015 by state, as well as annual expenditures.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8w35m437#page-1

“Today the Delta is buffeted by the accelerating effects of climate change, invasive species, recurring droughts, floods, and social, economic, and political influences. Management in this mélange of change is challenging, not the least because of our incomplete knowledge of how these forces interact … of even how the Delta ecosystem functions when these major drivers are changing…. Expanding the use of Adaptive Management in the Delta will require changes in the culture of management in the Delta. Agencies will need to be more collaborative, sharing staff and resources as challenges require. Managers and decision-makers will need to expect and prepare for uncertainty, take risks, be able to change their minds, and be rewarded for doing so.”
HEALTH

http://www.bmj.com/content/358/bmj.j3418 (Available at the California State Library)

“The ‘complete the course’ message has persisted despite not being supported by evidence and previous arguments that it should be replaced. One reason it may be so resilient is that it is simple and unambiguous, and the behaviour it advocates is clearly defined and easy to carry out. Nevertheless, there is evidence that, in many situations, stopping antibiotics sooner is a safe and effective way to reduce antibiotic overuse. Daily review of the continued need for antibiotics is a cornerstone of antibiotic stewardship in hospitals, but in primary care, where 85% of antibiotic prescriptions are written, no such ongoing assessment is attempted.”

HUMAN SERVICES

https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/7-17-17pov.pdf

“Government economic security programs such as food assistance, housing subsidies, and working-family tax credits—which bolster income, help families afford basic needs, and keep millions of children above the poverty line—also have longer-term benefits…. Studies of the long-term effect of government assistance show ‘remarkably consistent evidence’ of improved long-term outcomes for participating children…. Assistance programs … and housing assistance not only help low-income families get by today, but also help children thrive in the long run by improving their health status, educational success, and future work outcomes.”

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY


Genome editing has excited interest around the world for the advances it may bring to human health, but with those advances come questions about how to avoid unwanted consequences surrounding the wide range of uses. “[I]t is important to examine the scientific, ethical, and social issues [genome editing] raises, and assess the capacity of governance systems to ensure the technologies’ responsible development and use.” This book looks closely at ethical issues surrounding genome editing, offering conclusions and recommendations for the policy and scientific community.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE


“This Worst Case Housing Needs report is the sixteenth in a longstanding series providing national data and analysis of the critical problems facing very low-income renting families. Households with worst case needs are defined as very low-income renters who do not receive government housing assistance and who paid more than one-half of their income for rent, lived in severely inadequate conditions, or both. The report draws on data from the 2015 American Housing Survey (AHS)…. We find that benefits of the
strengthening national economy are not adequately flowing to renter households at the lowest income levels and severe housing problems are on the rise.

About the California Research Bureau

The California Research Bureau at the California State Library develops independent, nonpartisan research and analysis for the executive and legislative branches. We provide policy research, 50-state reviews, academic and media summaries, data analysis and much more. To learn more about us or to make a request, or to subscribe to Studies in the News, contact crb@library.ca.gov, or call (916) 319-2691.