

communication; or developing a state youth coordinating council.

- State or local agencies might partner with employers to support low-income working families by matching the employer's provision of paid release time to take job-related classes. Agencies could also partner with employers to offer lunchtime classes on such topics as choosing a child care provider, conflict resolution, or repairing bad credit.

#### *Long-Term Care Services and Resources*

- States interested in experimenting with "consumer-directed" approaches to home and community-based long-term care services could undertake a variety of innovative practices, for example: developing the specialized infrastructure needed for consumers to recruit and manage home care workers directly, without having to take on the business-related tasks of issuing paychecks and making required tax filings; providing consumer-directed service options within managed care structures; providing options for particular constituencies, such as elders with Alzheimer's disease and their families; or growing small pilot programs to scale and adapting those originally funded with state revenues to conform to Medicaid requirements.

- States could develop campaigns to make residents aware of their risk for long-term care and their options for planning ahead, including purchasing private long-term care insurance. States could use their existing aging infrastructure to ensure that persons nearing retirement age are offered the resources and assistance necessary for successful planning, or they could use the grant resources to investigate the best and most cost-effective mechanisms for educating citizens so that future resources will be well targeted.

- Allegations of poor quality, abuse, and neglect in nursing homes are giving rise to an increasing number of private lawsuits and, as a result, liability insurance premiums for facilities in a number of states have gone sky high. States may choose to apply for state innovation grants to develop working partnerships with private liability insurers to identify "best practices" for nursing homes that, if adopted by facilities, can be linked to liability premium discounts.

- States, providers, consumers and others are increasingly struggling with a serious crisis in recruiting and retaining a quality, committed workforce to provide long-term care services in institutional and home and community-based settings. States may opt to use state innovation funds to develop and implement programs to address the shortage. For example, states could experiment with providing new training programs, establishing alternative approaches to management and supervision, improving benefits for direct care workers, or creating career ladders.

Dated: May 15, 2002.

**William F. Raub,**

*Principal Deputy Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.*

[FR Doc. 02-13034 Filed 5-23-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4120-01-P**

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

### **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**

#### **Public comments on EPC Report "Systems to Rate the Strength of Scientific Evidence"**

**AGENCY:** The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), HHS.

**ACTION:** Request for public comments.

**SUMMARY:** To inform its response to a legislative mandate to develop and disseminate methods or systems to rate scientific evidence found in health care research studies (*see Background* section, below), AHRQ commissioned the Research Triangle Institute-University of North Carolina Evidence-based Practice Center (RTI/UNC EPC) to undertake a study on systems to rate the quality of scientific evidence. The goals of the EPC study were to describe systems to rate the strength of scientific evidence, including evaluating the quality of individual articles that make up a body of evidence on a specific scientific question in health care, and to provide some guidance as to current "best practices" with respect to rating scientific evidence regarding a particular clinical treatment or technology.

The RTI/UNC EPC completed their study and submitted to AHRQ the report "Systems to Rate the Strength of Scientific Evidence". The report includes the EPC's methodological approach (*e.g.*, search strategy, data collection, analysis of findings) and discusses identification of systems, factors important in developing and using rating systems, and a "best practices" orientation to selecting systems for use. The report also includes recommendations for future research.

The comprehensive report "Systems to Rate the strength of Scientific Evidence, is available on AHRQ's web page at <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/evrptfiles.htm#strength>". The report also is available, without charge, from the AHRQ Clearinghouse by calling 800-358-9295.

There are a variety of audiences for the guidance that the Agency will disseminate on this subject, who we hope will be interested in evaluating the usefulness of this EPC report for their purposes and who will also describe the type of guidance that would be most helpful to them. Obtaining comment on how the AHRQ can best fulfill its legislative mandate to identify and disseminate guidance on systems to rate

the strength of scientific evidence, is essential to fulfill its commitment to inform all segments of the health care community. We are interested in receiving comments on the report's overall clarity, usefulness, and thoroughness, and we also welcome suggestions on the type of guidance that would be most helpful to researchers, policymakers, provider systems, professional societies, practitioners, patients, and others. For example, what do professional societies, practitioners, payors, policymakers need to know about grading scientific evidence? What parts of the EPC report will be used in day-to-day health care decision making? Is some part this information useful to patients? What are the most useful format(s) for the guidance that AHRQ should use for its dissemination strategy with particular audiences or users?

**DATES:** For particular audiences or uses, or explanation of particular rating systems to be considered for incorporation and discussion in the guidance AHRQ will provide in the near future in accordance with its legislative mandate, written comments must be received by August 22, 2002. Comments should be sent to Jacqueline Besteman (e-mail attached file preferred), at [jbestema@ahrq.gov](mailto:jbestema@ahrq.gov); or faxed to 301-594-4027.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jacqueline Besteman, J.D., M.A., Director, EPC Program, Center for Practice and Technology Assessment AHRQ, 6010 executive Blvd., Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20852; Phone: (301) 594-4017; Fax: (301) 594-4027; e-mail: [jbestema@ahrq.gov](mailto:jbestema@ahrq.gov).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **Background**

AHRQ is the lead Federal agency for enhancing the quality, appropriateness, and effectiveness of healthcare services and access to such services. In carrying out this mission, AHRQ conducts and funds research that develops and presents evidence-based information on healthcare outcomes, quality, cost, use and access. Included in AHRQ's legislative mandate is support of syntheses of scientific clinical and behavioral studies on particular treatments and technologies, and wide-spread dissemination of the resultant evidence reports and technology assessments. The mandate includes dissemination of guidance on methods or systems for rating the strength of scientific evidence. These research findings, syntheses, and guidance are intended to assist providers, clinicians, payers, patients, and policymakers in making evidence-based decisions

regarding the quality and effectiveness of health care.

Section 911(a), part B, Title IX, Healthcare Research and Quality Act of 1999, requires in part that AHRQ, in collaboration with experts from the public and private sectors, identify methods or systems to assess health care research results, particularly "methods or systems to rate the strength of the scientific evidence underlying health care practice, recommendations in the research literature, and technology assessments." The Agency is to make methods or systems for rating evidence, widely available. To inform its response to this mandate, AHRQ invites public comments on the RTI/UNC EPC study noted above.

Dated: May 17, 2002.

**Carolyn M. Clancy,**  
*Acting Director.*

[FR Doc. 02-13152 Filed 5-23-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4160-90-M**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[60Day-02-56]

**Proposed Data Collections Submitted for Public Comment and Recommendations**

In compliance with the requirement of section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 for opportunity for public comment on proposed data collection projects, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will publish periodic summaries of proposed projects. To request more information on the proposed projects or to obtain a copy of the data collection plans and instruments, call the CDC Reports Clearance Officer on (404) 498-1210.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Send comments to Anne O'Connor, CDC Assistant Reports Clearance Officer, 1600 Clifton Road, MS-D24, Atlanta, GA 30333. Written comments should be received within 60 days of this notice.

**Proposed Project**

Evaluation of Customer Satisfaction of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Internet Home Page and Links

(OMB. No. 0920-0449)—Extension—CDC and ATSDR proposes to continue to conduct consumer satisfaction research around its Internet site in order to determine whether the information, services, and materials on this web site are presented in an appropriate technological format and whether it meets the needs, wants, and preferences of visitors or "customers" to the Internet site. The re-authorized survey will be conducted over the next three years and survey results will be analyzed and interpreted semiannually. Customers on the web site will only be asked to respond once.

Information on the site focuses on disease prevention, health promotion, and epidemiology. The site is designed to serve the general public, persons at risk for disease, injury, and illness, and health professionals. This research will ensure that these audiences have the opportunity to provide "customer feedback" regarding the value and effectiveness of the information, services, and products of the CDC and ATSDR Web site and whether these materials are easy to access, clear and informative. There are no costs to respondents.

Respondents	Number of respondents	Number of responses/respondent	Average burden/response (in hours)	Total burden (in hours)
Visitors to CDC Internet Site .....	13,000	1	10/60	2,166
Total .....	.....	.....	.....	2,166

Dated: May 17, 2002.

**John Moore,**  
*Acting Associate Director for Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[FR Doc. 02-13040 Filed 5-23-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4163-18-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

**National Task Force on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect: Notice of Charter Renewal**

This gives notice under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law

92-463) of October 6, 1972, that the National Task Force on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the Department of Health and Human Services, has been renewed for a 2-year period extending through May 17 2004.

For further information, contact Dixie E. Snider, Jr., M.D., Acting Executive Secretary, National Task Force on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect, 1600 Clifton Road, NE, m/s D-50, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. Telephone 404/639-7240, or fax 404/639-7341.

The Director, Management Analysis and Services Office, has been delegated the authority to sign **Federal Register** notices pertaining to announcements of meetings and other committee

management activities, for both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

Dated: May 17, 2002.

**John Burckhardt,**  
*Acting Director, Management Analysis and Services Office, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[FR Doc. 02-13071 Filed 5-23-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4163-18-P**