

Board of Advisors

February 3, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Advisors of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy (distribution list below)

FROM: Jon Baron

RE: Update - front-page NY Times article on need for RCTs

We're pleased to report on the following developments in our work to advance evidence-based policy reform:

1. **Today's New York Times has an excellent [front-page article](#) which, citing the Coalition's work, highlights evidence from randomized controlled trials as a critical missing piece needed for successful reform of the U.S. health care system.** Authored by Times reporter Gina Kolata, the article includes quotes from Coalition Board member Bob Boruch and myself, as well as colleagues Gordon Berlin, Bill Savedoff, Mary Naylor, and Amy Finkelstein. It also cites an evidence [review](#) of the Transitional Care Model by the Coalition's Top Tier Evidence initiative. In addition to appearing on the front page, the article is currently on the NY Times "most emailed" list, suggesting broad interest in the topic.
2. **New randomized trials have produced encouraging initial evidence that DoED's evidence-based Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund is successfully identifying and funding interventions that reliably increase student achievement when implemented on a large scale.** The Department of Education's i3 Fund is one of the new federal "tiered evidence" programs, incorporating key evidence-based concepts that our organization has helped advance. A central feature of this approach is that the largest grants are awarded to fund large-scale implementation of program models backed by strong scientific evidence of effectiveness. Among the federal tiered-evidence programs, i3's evidence standard for such scale-up grants is particularly rigorous, requiring a demonstration of policy-important effects in scientifically-credible evaluations, with a preference for well-conducted randomized trials.

The key question is whether the government's use of such evidence to select program models for scale up will actually lead to the hoped-for gains in educational achievement. Encouraging initial answers to that question are emerging from new randomized trials evaluating three of the four program models awarded scale-up grants in i3's initial year: Reading Recovery, Success for All, and Teach for America. See our [two-page summary](#) of the new findings.

3. **To follow up on our earlier communications, we'd appreciate your help in sharing the following with parties that might be interested:**
 - **The Coalition's new [competition](#) to select and fund low-cost randomized trials.** The deadline for prospective applicants to submit a

Robert Boruch
University of Pennsylvania

Jonathan Crane
Coalition for Evidence-Based
Policy

David Ellwood
Harvard University

Judith Gueron
MDRC

Ron Haskins
Brookings Institution

Blair Hull
Matlock Capital

Robert Hoyt
Jennison Associates

David Kessler
Former FDA Commissioner

Jerry Lee
Jerry Lee Foundation

Dan Levy
Harvard University

Jodi Nelson
Bill & Melinda Gates
Foundation

Howard Rolston
Abt Associates

Isabel Sawhill
Brookings Institution

Martin Seligman
University of Pennsylvania

Robert Solow
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology

Nicholas Zill
Westat, Inc.

President

Jon Baron
jbaron@coalition4evidence.org
(202) 683-8049

1725 I Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20006
www.coalition4evidence.org

letter of interest (three pages) is February 14.

- **The Coalition's [open online workshop in evidence-based policy](#).** The workshop's next set of phone sessions, providing hands-on experience in reviewing studies, will take place on Thursdays at noon EST from April 24 through June 12. Interested parties should contact David Anderson (<mailto:danderson@coalition4evidence.org>, 202-239-1248).

We hope this update is helpful. Any thoughts or suggestions you have on our work would be much appreciated.

Jon

Jon Baron
President, Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy
www.coalition4evidence.org
202-683-8049

Distribution:

Bob Boruch
Jonathan Crane
David Ellwood
Deborah Gorman-Smith
Judy Gueron
Ron Haskins
Bob Hoyt
Blair Hull
David Kessler
Jerry Lee
Dan Levy
Jodi Nelson
Howard Rolston
Belle Sawhill
Martin Seligman
Bob Solow
Nick Zill