The RAND Corporation and RAND Health

The RAND Corporation develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest.

RAND's research and analysis address issues that impact people around the world, including security, health, education, sustainability, growth, and development. Research is carried out by four units that address social and economic policy issues; by three federally funded research and development centers that focus on national security; by professors and graduate students at the Pardee RAND Graduate School; and by RAND Europe, an independently chartered European affiliate.

Approximately 1,700 people from more than 50 countries work at RAND. Our research staff is our greatest asset because their collective professional backgrounds, academic experience, and cultural diversity uniquely position us to answer the toughest policy questions. This diversity reinforces RAND's core values of quality and objectivity by promoting creativity, deepening understanding of the practical effects of policy, and ensuring multiple viewpoints and perspectives.

Our researchers have advanced degrees in more than 350 disciplines and apply state-of-the-art methods to address a broader range of issues than any other research organization. We build teams of preeminent researchers across a variety of fields to answer the difficult policy questions.

Our research is sponsored by government agencies, foundations, other nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. We rely on philanthropic support to reach beyond the scope of client-sponsored work to tackle questions that may be too big, too complex, or too new for our clients to address.

RAND's U.S. locations include Santa Monica, California, the home of its headquarters campus and the Pardee RAND Graduate School; Arlington, Virginia; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Boston, Massachusetts; and RAND Gulf States Policy Institute offices in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Jackson, Mississippi. RAND Europe is located in Cambridge, UK and Brussels, BE.

RAND's Board of Trustees includes leaders in government, private industry, and public service.

RAND Health is a division within the RAND Corporation. With an annual budget of more than $70 million, it is one of the largest private health research groups in the world. Between 250 and 300 projects are currently under way, addressing a wide range of health care policy issues; the agenda emphasizes policy research that can improve the health of people around the world. The research staff of between 250 to 300 experts includes physicians, economists, psychologists, mathematicians, organizational analysts, political scientists, psychometricians, medical sociologists, policy analysts, and statisticians.

RAND Health research studies are coordinated through two programs that focus on long-standing core areas of RAND Health's policy research expertise: Health Services Delivery Systems and Population Health.

Our work in Health Services Delivery Systems addresses issues surrounding the delivery of health care services, including the cost and quality of services, patient access, experience, and outcomes; the impact of new models of health care payment and delivery; medical workforce trends; and the impact of technological innovation on service delivery and patient health.

Our work in Population Health addresses public health issues, including social, environmental, and cultural influences on the health of populations; health inequities and disparities among different populations; community and population resilience; and relationships among environmental factors and individual health behaviors (e.g., eating habits, smoking) that influence the prevalence of chronic disease.

RAND Health is led by Jeffrey Wasserman, vice president and director.

RAND provides strong research support services, including an information infrastructure that facilitates work across multiple locations, highly sophisticated computing software and hardware systems, an extensive data collection facility, a state-of-the art publications department, schedule management and financial systems for tracking projects, and professional advisory groups that contribute statistical, survey, and communications support to projects. We highlight some of these support services below.

Computing Operations and Services—includes more than 2,000 microcomputers running Windows and Macintosh operating systems, and more than 100 workstations running Sun Solaris or Linux. All are connected in an internal network with global reach, allowing email, file sharing, and access to RAND's intranet, as well as to the Internet. Exchange servers support email using MAPI, IMAP, and POP clients. Dial-up access to RAND's network is available worldwide via Infonet's DialXpress access points. Other forms of collaboration available to RAND staff include data conferencing using the applications Adobe Connect (Windows-based) and Timbuktu (Windows and Macintosh), which are installed on all RAND microcomputers; videoconferencing via facilities in each RAND site; and web conferencing via a dedicated RAND WebEx site. RAND's computing support staff of more than 140 provides a full complement of research programming, system administration, Helpdesk, and troubleshooting support services.

Cross-Site Communication—includes computer and email systems that link the offices and provide immediate access to data, interactive video teleconferencing facilities, an overnight Federal Express pouch, SharePoint, and Adobe Connect; all conference rooms are outfitted with fixed computers, projectors, and wireless keyboards.

Financial Systems—including Oracle Financials for accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, fixed assets, general ledger, and contracts management. Additional financial records management is supported with a Stellent document management system. In-house

developed systems support pricing, budgeting, and funding. OASIS—a web-based project cost- and labor-reporting system—can be accessed by all staff from RAND's internal homepage. Financials data is "refreshed" every two weeks, when RAND's biweekly electronic timesheets are completed and processed. OASIS provides the following types of information for each task: labor days by person, labor dollars, travel (dollars spent, commitments remaining) by trip, computer costs (by person), publications costs, survey costs, other direct costs, and subcontract costs. The cost and labor information can be viewed as of the current period, for the fiscal year to date, or from the inception of the project. Data in OASIS can be downloaded into Microsoft tools as the basis for customized management reporting. More sophisticated financials analysis and reporting is performed by finance and unit management staff using Business Objects software.

Human Subjects Protection Committee—reviews research involving human subjects, as required by federal regulations, and complies with the regulations of 17 federal departments and agencies. The committee is responsible for review of all research involving human subjects, regardless of source of funding.

Information Sciences Group—supplies consulting in the information sciences to RAND projects as needed. It also provides some assistance to RAND information scientists for conference attendance and publication of papers in their discipline.

RAND Knowledge Services—is one of the largest special libraries in California, with additional locations in Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Knowledge Services acquires, organizes, and provides access to information resources to enable RAND to achieve its research, educational, and business goals; provides information retrieval and consulting services to staff in all locations; and contributes to the preservation and dissemination of RAND's intellectual legacy. Knowledge Services provides all RAND staff with access to state-of-the-art networked resources, including ROCS (the RAND Online Catalog System), and more than 125 specialized online database services, all of which are available around-the-clock. It offers access to 30,000 journal titles (almost all digital) and its extensive collection includes 80,000 print items and more than 70,000 e-books. Staff offer a full slate of services including literature searching; research consulting; user education; classified information services; project acquisitions; subscription and renewal management; EndNote bibliographic citation managers; interlibrary loan and document delivery; current awareness services; and data file storage, management, and consulting.

Office of External Affairs—whose job is to ensure the wide dissemination of our reports and findings to the media and the general public, and also to conduct targeted dissemination to key policymakers capable of using our work to make a difference. OEA is responsible for RAND's overall communications strategy.

OEA offers communication expertise in several domains.

- Congressional outreach. The Office of Congressional Relations (OCR) makes RAND research readily accessible to Congress to inform policymaking deliberations

and decisions. OCR accomplishes this through meetings on Capitol Hill, our monthly Congressional Briefing Series, testimony, fact sheets describing recent research, and policy-specific e-newsletters. OCR subscribes to a frequently updated list of legislative staff in the House and Senate with a breakdown of their specific policy assignments. This allows OCR to target legislative efforts by policy area, geographical breakdown, or committee assignment. In addition, OCR holds training workshops to familiarize RAND researchers with congressional culture, expectations, and needs in order to translate our research into a format that is readily usable in a fast-paced, bottom line–based, politically oriented congressional environment without compromising its quality or objectivity.

- Web and social media dissemination. RAND's website—www.rand.org—includes more than 80,000 pages; print and electronic newsletters; print marketing materials such as brochures and the annual report; and webinars, streaming video, and audio podcasts. RAND uses social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to extend the reach of its research.

- Media outreach. RAND engages with journalists throughout the world to generate coverage of our findings and staff in a way that furthers RAND's mission to improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. The Office of Media Relations (OMR) identifies those specific media outlets with which RAND most wishes to build relationships. It sets up media interviews; produces news releases, memos, and advisories; edits and places op-eds, letters, and blog postings; and provides media training so RAND staffers can more effectively present their views. OMR also tracks mentions of RAND in the media.

- Publishing at RAND. OEA supports research projects with editorial and content development; art, design, and production; permissions; printing; and more.

- Research Communications Group. This group offers the services of communications analysts (CAs), who are trained and experienced in analyzing and solving communications problems. CAs provide assistance at all stages of research, writing, and briefing. They help staff plan communication strategies and draft and revise proposals, briefings, and documents. The CAs also work with research teams to develop products for particular audiences. These products include policy-oriented summaries and briefings intended to highlight key findings for public- and private-sector decisionmakers.

Privacy Resource Office—helps projects manage private and proprietary data, and provides guidelines for data safeguarding.

Quality Assurance Process—responsibility for achieving quality falls on the principal investigator(s), the center/initiative directors, RAND Health's research quality assurance manager, and RAND Health's director and associate directors. Quality assurance encompasses both ongoing informal assistance and review and formal retrospective quality

assessment. Reviews, whether formal or informal, are expected to challenge work in ways that will improve it. Reviewers work with researchers within project timelines and resources, while maintaining an independent perspective. The review process is designed to promote objectivity, high technical standards, and cross-fertilization of ideas and methods.

Research Programming Group—provides programming support to RAND research staff. Research programmers have expertise with statistical programming systems such as SAS, R, and Stata; widely used administrative and military datasets; database design and management; GIS techniques; standard military models; programming languages; and application development tools. RPG staff have unique experience in analyzing extremely large datasets using Linux computer systems. Most research programmers have a master's degree in statistical, technical, or subject areas and work as members of research project teams.

Statistics Group—Statisticians contribute at all stages of a research project, including collaboration on design, sampling, measurement, analysis, computing, and presentation of the results. In the areas of design, sampling, and measurement, group expertise includes knowledge about clinical trials, complex survey design and analysis, experimental design, observational study design, computer experiments, survey nonresponse, imputation and other methods for dealing with missing data, measurement error, psychometrics and scaling, and web-based survey methods. In terms of analysis and computing, members' expertise includes Bayesian methods, causal inference methods such as propensity score analysis, computationally intensive methods such as Markov Chain Monte Carlo, data mining and techniques for dealing with massive datasets, forecasting and time series, graphics and visualization, hierarchical and multilevel modeling, linear and logistic regression, longitudinal data analysis, meta-analysis and literature synthesis, and nonparametric methods.

Survey Research Group—includes a full-time, 25-person staff working in Santa Monica, California, and Washington, D.C. Survey directors and coordinators provide start-to-finish continuity for projects, with a single staff member taking responsibility for a project from initial design through delivery of a final product. The survey operations staff collaborates closely with the survey directors and coordinators to provide a project's operations needs— instrument layout, document production, data collection, coding, and data reduction, as well as cost control. SRG has a computerized telephone interviewing center with the capability for remote monitoring by clients, as well as facilities for mail surveys, packet preparation, coding, and data entry. It also staffs and carries out personal interviewing projects around the country and abroad.

More information about RAND Health is available online at www.rand.org/health.

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