

**SPR 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS I  
May 27, 2008**

**Advocacy and Public Policy**

Researchers often complain about the lack of attention to research findings to guide policy and decision making. Policymakers often complain that researchers address topics that are not policy-relevant, produce ambiguous or conflicting findings or report findings in ways that are inaccessible to policymakers. Both groups suggest that high-quality research could and should be used to inform and shape policies and practices. This will only happen, however, as researchers better understand the questions and problems that concern policymakers and when policymakers and practitioners better understand what constitutes high-quality research and demand it. These two workshops are designed for researchers and advocates of science-based information to better understand the policymaking process and needs of policymakers, opportunities for involvement and influence in the process, and hands-on experience in effectively communicating scientific information to policymakers.

**Advocacy: Strategies and Opportunities for Impact**

Jon Baron, J.D. is Executive Director of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, a non-profit non-partisan organization in Washington D.C. Brian Wilcox is Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Nebraska and Director of the University's Center on Children, Families and the Law and chair of UNL's Family Research and Policy Initiative. This half-day training will build from the morning session to provide participants with information regarding the multiple opportunities available, including those beyond the legislative process, for researchers and prevention scientists to be involved in affecting policy and practice. The workshop will focus on how research can be used to have a meaningful impact on policy and factors that relate to successful (and unsuccessful) use of research in guiding policy. The stages of policy making, from problem definition to the regulatory process and implementation and evaluation will be discussed. Workshop participants will have the opportunity for hands on experience in developing effective communication strategies.

Learning objectives of this workshop include:

- 1) Increased understanding of how research can and should inform policy
- 2) Increased ability to identify problems potentially amenable to policy action
- 3) Increased ability to communicate research findings in language useful to policymakers
- 4) Increased awareness of opportunities for researchers and prevention scientists to be involved and influence policy beyond the federal legislative process