

## Summary of Ad Hoc Group Town Hall Meeting February 25, 2011

### **FY 2011 Endgame**

Jennifer Zeitzer, Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), led a discussion on the status of FY 2011 appropriations. Several groups shared the strategies they used to activate their memberships in opposition to the NIH cuts in H.R. 1, including grassroots emails and phone calls to the Hill, meetings with new Members of Congress, and opinion-editorials in the press. Messages that seem to be resonating with spending critics include the importance of preserving instead of dismantling the capacity that has been built to date and the economic/jobs benefits of federal investments in research. (These are some of the themes that are included in a set of talking points and a fact sheet prepared by the Ad Hoc Group steering committee for your use and available at the links below.) Groups also shared some of the counter-arguments Congressional offices have presented, such as: blanket statements that the debt/deficit have necessitated difficult funding decisions; questions about the need to invest in NIH in light of funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (P.L. 111-5); and a belief that the private sector will undertake un-funded initiatives.

Jennifer also presented a preliminary analysis FASEB conducted to gauge the impact of the proposed \$1.6 billion cut; some of this data, as well as other information on NIH funding trends from FY 1995-2012, is available at: <http://www.faseb.org/Policy-and-Government-Affairs/Data-Compilations/NIH-Research-Funding-Trends.aspx>

The steering committee presented a draft template letter targeted to Members that voted to approve H.R. 1. The letter has a placeholder for groups to include the district-specific funding level for each Member (available through the NIH's RePORT website at [http://report.nih.gov/award/trends/State\\_Congressional/StateOverview.cfm](http://report.nih.gov/award/trends/State_Congressional/StateOverview.cfm)) and seeks to convey that not all federal spending is inefficient, ineffective, or wasteful. The steering committee will send such letters to key offices on behalf of the Ad Hoc Group, but also encouraged individual organizations to send similar letters. The steering committee also encouraged attendees to continue educating Senate offices about the deleterious effects of H.R. 1/funding cuts for NIH.

### **Discussion of FY 2012 Advocacy**

Erica Froyd, Lewis-Burke Associates, and Mary Jo Hoeksema, Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers, led a discussion on groups' planned advocacy activities for the next fiscal year. Several groups described upcoming Hill days, as well as activities planned in lawmakers' home districts, particularly those in key appropriations districts. Some groups described studies that have been commissioned to gather the most recent data on the economic impact of medical research.

Several attendees described the challenge of energizing grassroots to rally against repeated, prolonged threats to NIH funding. Regarding the Ad Hoc Group's FY 2012 recommendation, the steering committee approved a recommendation of \$35 billion in December 2010; town hall participants agreed that in the current environment, the most productive appropriations strategy is a focused emphasis on *messaging* to demonstrate that an investment in NIH is an efficient and effective use of federal resources, rather than a number-driven approach. Attendees expressed support for the Ad Hoc Group's ongoing activities, including a series of upcoming Congressional briefings planned to educate staff about NIH.

### **Links**

Ad Hoc Group NIH Talking Points: <https://www.aamc.org/research/adhocgp/0211talkingpoints.pdf>

Ad Hoc Group NIH Fact Sheet: <https://www.aamc.org/research/adhocgp/0211factsheet.pdf>