

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – January 30, 2017

Each week, the Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up will feature hashtags and/or tweets suggested by members of the NIH advocacy community. We encourage all readers who are active on social media to use these messages, and welcome suggestions from the community for future issues of the Weekly Round-Up.

Follow us on Twitter. The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research is now on Twitter: @fundNIH

1. Senate Appropriations Committee Announces Subcommittee Leadership and Membership Rosters

On Jan. 24, the Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) and Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) [announced](#) the 115th chairs, ranking members, and membership rosters. New Labor-HHS Subcommittee members include Senators Kennedy (R-La.), Rubio (R-Fla.), Murphy (D-Conn.), and Manchin (D-W.Va).

2. President Issues New Executive Orders

On Jan. 30, President Trump issued an [executive order](#) related to “reducing regulation and controlling regulatory costs.” The action taken by the president requires that an executive department or agency repeal two existing regulations for every new regulation issued.

Additionally, on Jan. 27, the president issued an [executive order](#) on immigration which limits entry to the U.S. for citizens of seven specified countries. Several news outlets described the potential impact on researchers including [The Washington Post](#), [Science](#), and [Nature](#). Alan Townsend, a professor and associate vice chancellor for research at the University of Colorado at Boulder also penned this [op-ed](#) and the potential impact on science.

3. Recap of HHS Secretary Confirmation Hearings, Tuesday Vote Scheduled

The Senate Finance Committee held a [confirmation](#) hearing Jan. 24 for President Trump’s nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services, Rep. Tom Price, M.D. (R-Ga.). Like he did at the HELP committee hearing a week earlier, Dr. Price highlighted important work happening at the agency stating, “HHS is more than just health care. There are real heroes at this department doing incredible work to keep our food safe, to develop new drugs and treatment options – driven by scientists conducting truly remarkable research.”

On Jan. 29, the Senate Finance Committee announced a confirmation vote on Jan. 31 for Dr. Price. The [hearing](#) is scheduled for 10:00 a.m in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building.

4. Recap of OMB Director Confirmation Hearings

The Senate [Budget](#) Committee and [Homeland Security and Government Affairs](#) Committee held hearings Jan. 24 on the nomination of Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-S.C.) to lead the Office of

Management and Budget (OMB). In response to a question from Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) at the Budget hearing, Rep. Mulvaney expressed his support of federal funding for research saying, “Generally, I do believe that there is a proper role for the federal government in research.” Further explaining his stance he said, in certain circumstances, “the key is not the amount of the grant to begin with, but what we're getting for the taxpayer dollars.” In a separate exchange during the Homeland Security hearing, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) inquired if increases in defense spending should be offset with decreases in non-defense discretionary spending. Rep. Mulvaney replied, “I have voted regularly and plan to advise the president that the best possible route forward is to raise the top line defense number and of course have reductions in the non-defense discretionary.”

5. Letter Supporting the Safety of Vaccines

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is circulating a letter to President Trump expressing unequivocal support for the safety of vaccines. The letter affirms the overwhelming scientific consensus that vaccines are safe, effective, and save lives. The letter will be accompanied by a [non-exhaustive listing](#) of vaccine scientific evidence. The [letter](#) is open to state and national organizations. To add your organization, please complete the following [form](#). The deadline to sign on is **COB Friday, February 3**. Should you have any questions, please contact Pat Johnson at pjohnson@AAP.org.

6. Letter Supporting Nondefense Discretionary Programs

NDD United invites all national, state, and local organizations to join the list of attached organizations in signing [this letter](#) urging Congress to protect NDD programs from further cuts and to end sequestration. To sign, click [here](#) and complete the form. The deadline to sign on is February 10.

7. NIH Blog Post: The Revised Common Rule: A Tribute to the Past and a Promise for the Future

In an *Under the Poliscope* [blog post](#) Jan. 18, Dr. Carrie Wolinetz, NIH’s Associate Director for Science Policy discussed the revised Common Rule. She states, “The revision of the Common Rule is the endpoint of years of discussion, debate, thousands of public comments, and, most importantly, a dedication to the very people who it is designed to protect and to the researchers who serve as their partners in discovery.”

Please Note: If you have information of interest to the NIH advocacy community that you would like to share with the Ad Hoc Group, please forward it to Joe Bañez at jbanez@aamc.org or Tannaz Rasouli at trasouli@aamc.org.