

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – March 20, 2017

Each week, the Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up will feature hashtags and/or tweets (follow us at @fundNIH) suggested by members of the National Institutes of Health (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.

This week, through Twitter, the Ad Hoc Group wants to know how cuts to research funding will affect all Americans:

@FundNIH: *“What would cuts to research funding mean to you? Share using #FundNIH”*

Here’s a response to call for examples, tweeted by @TaliaLerner last week:

The most common childhood cancer, ALL, used to be a death sentence, but now it has >90% survival rate #fundNIH

1. Ad Hoc Group, Members of Congress React to Trump Budget Blueprint

On March 16, the White House [released](#) its fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget blueprint, which includes a nearly 20 percent proposed cut to NIH. Specifically, the budget blueprint proposes to cut funding for NIH by \$5.8 billion (18 percent) to \$25.9 billion, the lowest level for the agency since FY 2002. The budget blueprint also calls for a “major reorganization” within NIH, including the elimination of the [Fogarty International Center](#) and “other consolidations and structural changes across NIH organizations and activities” intended to “help focus resources on the highest priority research and training activities.” Additionally, the proposal aims to “[reduce] administrative costs and rebalance Federal contributions to research funding.”

In response to the proposal, the Ad Hoc Group released a [statement](#) cautioning that “cuts to NIH of such unprecedented magnitude would affect every American, including patients, their families, researchers, and communities where NIH investment spurs economic growth.”

Members of Congress also expressed concern with the proposed NIH cuts, including Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chair [Lamar Alexander](#) (R-Tenn.). During a [Meet the Press interview](#), Sen. Susan Collins cited the progress of the NIH and the negative impact of a cut of the proposed magnitude. Sens. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) wrote a [letter](#) to President Trump saying, “It is in our national interest that we provide robust federal funding for NIH to ensure that our Nation remains at the forefront of global medical research.” On the House side, Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-Kan.) released a [statement](#) signaling his opposition to the proposed cuts. House Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee Chair Tom Cole also expressed his concern during a [TV interview](#) the morning of March 17. Additionally, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) [hinted](#) that he expects changes to the proposed cuts, stating that the NIH is “something that’s particularly popular in Congress.”

2. House Labor-HHS Appropriations Hearing on NIH Postponed

The House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee has **postponed** its budget [hearing](#) on the NIH. NIH Director Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., was scheduled to testify.

According to the committee website, a new time and date are to be determined. Of note, on March 17, White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney sent a [memo](#) to department and agency leaders stating, “Until OMB releases the full FY 2018 Budget, all public comments of any sort should be limited to the information contained in the Budget Blueprint chapter for your agency.”

3. NIH Announcement on Continuing Resolution

On March 17, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) [published](#) an announcement regarding its operations under the current continuing resolution (CR), which was enacted in December 2016. As is customary under a CR, the notice states that the NIH “will issue non-competing research grant awards at a level below that indicated on the most recent Notice of Award (generally up to 90% of the previously committed level). Upward adjustments to awarded levels will be considered after FY 2017 appropriations are enacted, but NIH expects institutions to monitor their expenditures carefully during this period.”

4. President Trump Nominates Deputy Secretary of HHS

On March 14, President Trump [announced](#) his intent to nominate Eric D. Hargan to serve as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). According to the press release, Mr. Hargan has prior service at HHS. He has served as Deputy General Counsel, as Principal Associate Deputy Secretary, and as Acting Deputy Secretary in previous administrations.

5. National Coalition for Cancer Research: Cancer 101 Hill Briefing

The National Coalition for Cancer Research will host a briefing on Mar. 20 from noon – 1:30 p.m. in 2045 Rayburn (B-340). The briefing will provide attendees with an update on the cancer “Moonshot” initiative. Speakers include: Douglas R. Lowy, M.D., Acting Director, National Cancer Institute; George M. Demetri, M.D., Harvard Medical School, Dana Farber Cancer Institute; and David Arons, J.D., Chief Executive Officer, National Brain Tumor Society. Register by emailing msmith@libertypartnersgroup.com. Flyer attached.

6. Lunch Briefing Focusing on Vital Defense-related Vision Research

On Mar. 21, the Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR) will host a briefing entitled, “Deployment-Related Vision Trauma Research: Cornea Transplant Tissue Quality and Sight Restoration.” This briefing will take place at noon in 2040 Rayburn House Office Building. Please RSVP by emailing TaylorBeaumont1@gmail.com or calling 202-407-8320. Flyer attached.

7. American Heart Association and March of Dimes Host Lunch Briefing

The American Heart Association and March of Dimes will host a lunch briefing entitled, “Hidden Burdens: Covering Children With Pre-Existing Conditions.” The briefing will be held at the Capitol Visitors Center in S-217 on Mar. 21, from noon to 1 pm. Lunch will be served. RSVP by emailing Cindy Salinas at cindy.salinas@heart.org.

8. Capitol Hill Briefing on Antimicrobial Resistance

On Mar. 23, the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) will host a legislative briefing entitled, “Antimicrobial Resistance and One Health.” The briefing will take place in 385 Russell Senate Office Building from noon – 1:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Hayley Applegate (happlegate@aavmc.org) by Mar. 22. Flyer attached.

9. World Tuberculosis Day Congressional Briefing

On Mar. 24, the American Thoracic Society (ATS), RESULTS, and the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association (NTCA) will host a World TB Day Congressional Briefing entitled, “Tuberculosis: The Leading Global Infectious Killer.” The briefing will take place from noon – 1:30pm in 2075 Rayburn House Office Building. The briefing will also feature a showing of an excerpt from a short film entitled “Breathe In.” Please RSVP by emailing dcrsvp@thoracic.org. Flyer attached.

10. AACR Hosts Capitol Hill Briefing on the Road to Cancer Survivorship

On April 4 from noon to 1:30pm, please join the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) for a briefing entitled, “The Road to Cancer Survivorship: Discover, Predict, Prevent, and Treat.” This briefing will be held in the Capitol Visitors Center, Room 268 (Congressional Meeting Room North). During its Annual Meeting, AACR leaders will brief Members of Congress, their staff and the community on the cutting edge cancer research taking place. It also will provide a forum to discuss priorities and challenges in cancer research today, including a focus on clinical trials, and highlight the perspectives of early-career investigators and cancer survivors. To RSVP for this event, please email govrelations@aacr.org. Lunch provided. Flyer attached.

11. Using Nanotechnology to Target Disease

On Friday, April 7, American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE) will host a luncheon briefing highlighting what's possible with nanomedicine, such as new cancer treatments, next-gen vaccines, and therapeutics for treating cystic fibrosis and asthma. Speakers include Daniel S. Kohane, M.D., Ph.D., at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital, and Warren Chan, Ph.D., at the University of Toronto. This briefing will take place in 2204 Rayburn House Office Building from 12:00 - 1:00 pm. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP by emailing Sarah Mandell at smandell@aimbe.org. Flyer attached.

12. National Science & Technology Medals Foundation Nominations

The National Science & Technology Medals Foundation announced that nominations for the National Medal of Science and the National Medal of Technology and Innovation are open. Medal of Science nominations can be submitted via [NSF's FastLane system](#) and Medal of Technology and Innovation recommendations can be submitted via [this webform](#). Nominations will be accepted until April 7.

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.