

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – April 3, 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. Here's this week's featured tweet:

American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) - @ASCO

75% of oncologists said funding challenges made it harder to conduct #cancerresearch during the last @NIH budget cut <http://bit.ly/2nNejeJ>

1. Proposed NIH Cuts Discussed at Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing

On March 29, the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee [held](#) a budget hearing with Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price, MD, on the department's fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget request. In a brief [opening statement](#), Secretary Price framed the cuts in the budget blueprint as "prioritizing critical programs and proposing the elimination of programs that are duplicative or ineffective." Subcommittee members voiced their support for the NIH, including Subcommittee Chair Tom Cole (R-Okla.) and Subcommittee Ranking Member Rosa Delauro (D-Conn.). Chairman Cole shared his "extreme concern" with the impact of the proposed cuts while Rep. Delauro said the cuts "will turn back the clock on life saving biomedical research." Also expressing support for NIH were Reps. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), Lucille Roybal Allard (D-Calif.), Mark Pocan (D-Wisc.) and the full committee ranking member, Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.),

2. House Oversight Members Voice Support for Medical Research at Hearing

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee [convened](#) a full committee hearing on March 29 regarding federally funded cancer research. Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) opened the hearing by sharing a personal story, stating that he lost both of his parents to cancer. He also expressed his concern over the proposal in the president's fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget blueprint to cut funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by \$5.8 billion (18 percent) to \$25.9 billion, which is the lowest level for the agency since FY 2002. He added, "I thought his budget proposal for this category was pathetic and inadequate. We should be spending billions of dollars to solve this." Statements of support for federally funded research also came from Committee Ranking Member Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), Rep. Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.) and Rep. John Duncan (R-Tenn.), among others.

3. White House Proposes Additional Cuts to Agencies in FY 2017 Spending Bills, including NIH

Multiple news outlets reported on a detailed [memo](#) from the White House to House and Senate appropriations committees regarding a request for an additional \$18 billion in FY 2017 discretionary spending cuts to offset supplemental defense and border security spending. The proposed reduction includes a recommendation to reduce spending for the NIH by \$1.2 billion by eliminating new spending on Institutional Development Award (IDeA) grants (\$50 million) and reducing research grants (\$1.182 billion). Members of Congress, including Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chair Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), and House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Tom Cole (R-Okla.) reacted by saying the request was "a little late." Prior to the request, appropriators on Capitol Hill have said progress is being made on FY 2017 negotiations.

4. Recap of NIH Advisory Committee to the Director Meeting

On March 28, the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) [held](#) a meeting to discuss proposed 21st Century Cures implementation plans for NIH. The meeting included presentations by: Lawrence A. Tabak, DDS, PhD, Principal Deputy Director of the NIH, who [presented](#) on the implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act; National Cancer Institute Acting Director Douglas Lowy, who [presented](#) on the Cancer Moonshot Initiative; Erick Dishman, director of the *All of Us* research program, [provided](#) an update on the precision medicine initiative; and Walter Koroshetz, MD, director of National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Joshua Gordon, MD, PhD, director for National Institute of Mental Health, who [presented](#) on the BRAIN initiative.

5. Boston Herald Opinion: Stakes High with NIH

The Boston Herald editorial staff [published](#) an opinion piece on April 2 characterizing the NIH as “one of the largest economic drivers in [the Boston] region.” The article articulates the fact that what sometimes goes unseen are “the thousands upon thousands of jobs those researchers with their bold ideas generate right here — for lab techs and radiologists and file clerks and the guy who cleans the autoclave.”

6. New Study Links Patents and Public Research Investments

On March 30, Science [published](#) a new study titled, “The applied value of public investments in biomedical research.” The study analyzed the productivity of NIH research grants and connected them with patents over a 27-year period. Researchers found that 8.4 percent of the grants studied were directly responsible for a patent. In an [article](#) that ran in Nature on the new study, NIH’s Deputy Director for Extramural Research Mike Lauer, MD, reacted to the results saying, “Whether we focus on scientific or technological advancement, these findings underscore the value of investing in a diverse portfolio of work.”

7. United for Medical Research Releases Report on the Economic Impact of NIH

United for Medical Research [released](#) its latest report on the economic impact of NIH during fiscal year 2016. The report found that “research funded by the NIH saves lives, improves health, and offers hope to people affected by disease.” The report also states that the NIH “supports almost 380,000 jobs and \$65 billion in economic activity across the United States, making NIH research an engine for both medical and economic progress.”

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

On April 4 from noon to 1:30 pm, American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) [will host](#) a briefing entitled, “The Road to Cancer Survivorship: Discover, Predict, Prevent, and Treat.” This briefing will take place 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.

9. Senate NIH Caucus Lunch Briefing on the Opioid Epidemic

On April 4, ACT for NIH and the Senate NIH Caucus will host a lunch briefing to discuss the opioid epidemic. This briefing will cover the latest efforts to understand and address the disease of addiction, promising research approaches, and how Congress can most effectively support this work. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Director Nora Volkow, MD, will be joined by senior researchers in the

field to review what we know, what we are still trying to learn, and how research can and must play a central role in providing solutions. Caucus Co-chairs Senators Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Dick Durbin (D-III.) will provide opening remarks. This briefing will begin at 11:30 am in the Capitol Visitors Center SVC 212. Boxed lunch will be served. RSVP by emailing RSVP@ACTforNIH.org. Flyer attached.

10. 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.

11. 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.