



## THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

### Ad Hoc Group Weekly COVID-19 Follow Up

April 9, 2020

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be publishing an additional weekly update focused on COVID-19 to highlight related NIH actions and guidance as well as activities from the Ad Hoc Group community. As always, please forward any relevant items to Christa Wagner ([chwagner@aamc.org](mailto:chwagner@aamc.org)) for inclusion in the publication!

## Congressional and Agency News and Updates

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### NIH Publishes Overview of COVID-19 Response for Applicants and Grantees

The NIH on April 6 published a [Word document](#) and [slide deck](#) providing information for NIH applicants and grantees related to COVID-19 and research activities. Topics include: patient care and researcher safety, NIH operating status, funding opportunities, donation of research supplies, and application deadlines. NIH has also established a COVID-19 [“Updates History” webpage](#) for applicants and grantees.

### Associations Urge Congress to Provide Supplemental Funding to Support Researchers

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the Association of American Universities, the Association of American Medical Colleges, and the American Council on Education sent an [April 7 letter](#) to Congress urging additional funding to support the research enterprise due to the impacts of COVID-19. The associations shared concerns about the research workforce and the “future health and strength of the U.S. research enterprise” as many labs have closed to abide by social distancing measures. The letter urges Congress to provide \$26 billion in supplemental appropriations for the major research agencies, including NIH.

### WSJ: COVID-19 Sidelines Research on Cancer, Other Diseases

The *Wall Street Journal* published an [April 4 article](#) highlighting the impacts of COVID-19 to advancing NIH-funded research and conducting clinical trials. NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, shared his reactions that NIH is “caught between trying to advance science and keeping our staff and patients safe.” Dr. Collins also noted that he encouraged intramural researchers to transition projects to study the novel coronavirus, as they are able, and cited over 50 proposals for new research from labs on the NIH campus.

### Possible COVID-19-related Risks for Those Who Smoke and Use Drugs

National Institutes of Drug Abuse (NIDA) Director Nora Volkow, MD, authored an April 2 *Annals of Internal Medicine* Ideas and Opinion piece titled, “Collision of the COVID-19 and

Addiction Epidemics.” The [NIH news release](#) summarizes Dr. Volkow’s main concerns for vulnerable populations during the pandemic, including: the possibilities of more severe COVID-19 complications for individuals with compromised lung conditions; difficulty engaging in social support for people recovering from addiction; and the possibility of decreased naloxone administration.

### **NIMH Director Discusses Mental Health During COVID-19 Pandemic**

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD and National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) Director Joshua Gordon, MD, PhD, [recently discussed](#) the emotional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Gordon discussed several ways to support your emotional health during this difficult time, including balancing news consumption with an activity you enjoy, exercising regularly, and connecting with others through digital tools and letter writing. Dr. Gordon also discussed warning signs of anxiety and when to seek help.

### **Virtual Activities for NIH Trainees**

The NIH Office of Intramural Training & Education has posted a page with [virtual activities for trainees](#) outside of the NIH, including wellness resources and professional development webinars. The website will be updated regularly.

## **Ad Hoc Group Community Resources**

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### **ASM Resources and Virtual Scientific Summit Report**

The American Society for Microbiology has established a special [COVID-19 resources page](#) with a wealth of information on the virus, including press and [policy statements](#), toolkits for educators, interviews with experts, and [links to scientific publications](#). On March 24, ASM held a virtual [International Scientific Summit](#) to discuss next steps for research with a particular focus on diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics. A [report from the summit](#) was published following the event, focusing on the value of diagnostic testing.

## **Upcoming Events**

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### **NASEM Conferences on Postsecondary Response to COVID-19 – April 9**

The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) will hold a series of conferences on Zoom titled “Postsecondary Response to COVID-19: National Hubs of Knowledge and Resources.” The [first conference](#) will consider “How can researchers help the national response efforts?” on Thursday, April 9 from 3:00 - 4:30 pm ET.

***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 Christa Wagner at [chwagner@aamc.org](mailto:chwagner@aamc.org) or Tannaz Rasouli at [trasouli@aamc.org](mailto:trasouli@aamc.org).*