

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – April 15, 2019

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 we welcome suggestions from the community for future issues of the Weekly Round Up. Here is this week's featured tweet:

Dr. Doug Lowy [@NCIDrDougLowy Apr 8](#)

"I'm humbled and honored to serve as Acting Director of [@theNCI](#) once again. This is an exceptional time in cancer research, given declining mortality rates, industry investment, and many new drug approvals. NCI aims to make the most of the extraordinary opportunities before us."

1. Senate Members Send Letter to Appropriators Requesting a Strong Commitment to the NIH in FY 2020

Senators Robert Casey (D-Pa.) and Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and [60 bipartisan members](#) of the Senate sent an April 15 [letter](#) to Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) and Ranking Member Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), and Labor-HHS Chair Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) requesting "a strong commitment to funding for the NIH" in FY 2020. Please join the Ad Hoc Group in thanking all Senators who signed the letter.

2. FY 2020 Public Witness Testimony Deadlines

The Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee posted [instructions](#) for submitting outside witness testimony ahead of its work on FY 2020 appropriations. According to the instructions, testimony should be no longer than four pages and sent to the Subcommittee no later than close of business June 3.

3. NIH Director Testifies Before House Appropriations Subcommittee

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, and the directors of NIAID, NCI, NIGMS, NIDDK, NIA, and NIDA [April 11 testified](#) on the fiscal year (FY) 2020 budget proposal before the Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee.

Subcommittee Chair Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) [noted](#) that cutting the NIH as proposed in the FY 2020 president's budget request "is not a choice I will make when we write the FY 2020 Labor-HHS appropriations bill." Full Appropriations Committee Chair Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) also commented that he is "not interested in cutting [the NIH] budget, I'm interested in increasing it."

Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) shared her view that "the NIH is perhaps the best example of an issue where members on both sides of the aisle have been able to come together ... to work in a bipartisan way to provide increased investment in research that improves the health and wellbeing of people, invests in our local our communities, and supports our country's continued leadership in science."

Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray also used the hearing as an opportunity to raise concerns about foreign influences on NIH-supported research and sexual harassment of female researchers.

4. House Deems Increased Budget Cap, Bipartisan Discussions on Legislation Begin

The House April 9 adopted a resolution to “deem” the overall discretionary budget cap at \$1.295 trillion in FY 2020, enabling the Appropriations Committee to begin drafting and considering the 12 annual spending bills at higher funding levels than currently permitted in statute. Though the resolution provides only a topline funding level, House Appropriations Committee Chair Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) reportedly plans to adhere to the defense-nondefense split proposed the Investing for the People Act ([H.R. 2021](#)) when setting the individual subcommittee 302(b) allocations.

Because the total funding level exceeds the BCA statutory caps, lawmakers eventually will need to pass legislation to modify the caps in statute. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) told reporters April 9 that after separate discussions with President Donald Trump and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), House and Senate leaders have agreed to assemble a group of staff to initiate discussions on a deal to address the spending caps in both FYs 2020 and 2021.

The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research issued an [April 10 statement](#) praising Congressional leaders for the announcement, noting the need for a bipartisan budget deal to allow sufficient investment in the NIH and other priorities.

5. NIAID Director Interviewed on *Politico* Pulse Check Podcast

NIAID Director Tony Fauci, MD, was interviewed [April 11](#) for an episode of *Politico's* Pulse Check podcast. Dr. Fauci discussed his more than 50 years at the NIH, including focusing on more immediate issues such as the measles outbreaks, the President's proposal to end the HIV epidemic within 10 years.

6. *Detroit News*: Cutting Animal Research Would Hurt Humans

An [op-ed](#) in the *Detroit News* by Matt Bailey, President of the Foundation for Biomedical Research, describes a campaign by animal rights advocates to persuade the Trump Administration to cut funding for the NIH. Mr. Bailey highlights the strict regulations already in place for animal research. He also notes the role animal research has played in advancing science, treatments, and cures by sharing, "More than 80 percent of the 216 winners of the Nobel Prize for physiology or medicine employed animals in their research."

7. NIH "All About Grants" Podcast on Maintaining Confidentiality in Peer Review

The NIH's [Extramural Nexus](#) site April 9 announced the next installment of the [NIH's All About Grants podcast series](#), featuring NIH's Review Policy Officer, Sally Amero, PhD, to discuss how NIH strives to maintain confidentiality and integrity in the peer review process. The podcast highlights "the core values of peer review, what reviewers agree to when serving on study sections, what may be discussed regarding study section meetings, and how applicants can learn more about the review of their application," and considers how NIH may take action when breaches in confidentiality occur.

Upcoming Hill Briefings and Other Events

8. AAMC/FASEB Hosting Webinar on NAS Sexual Harassment of Women in Science – April 22

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) are hosting the sixth and final webinar in their 2018 National Academies reports [webinar series](#). Study director Frazier Benya, PhD, of the National Academies, will unpack the key findings of the report "[Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#)". The webinar is being held on April 22 from 1:00-2:00pm and free [registration](#) is required.

9. COSSA Celebration of Social Science – April 30

Please join the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) Board of Directors, members, advocates, staff and special guests for a Celebration of Social Science Rooftop Reception on April 30 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Please see the attached invitation for details and feel free to share with others. [RSVP](#) is required to gain access to the rooftop.

10. Congressional Briefing on Diabetic Eye Disease – May 15

Please join the Alliance for Eye and Vision Research for a Congressional Briefing titled, "NEI's Diabetic Retinopathy Clinical Research Network: Optimizing Treatment for Diabetic Eye Disease." The briefing will take place Wednesday, May 15, from 12-1:15pm in 2044 Rayburn House Office Building. Please see attached flyer for additional information and RSVP to Dina Beaumont @ 202-407-8325 or dinabeau@aol.com.

11. NIH Regional Seminar in Baltimore, MD: May 15-17

The NIH is hosting the Spring 2019 NIH Regional Seminar on Program Funding and Grants Administration in Baltimore, MD, from Wed. May 15- Fri. May 17. Visit the [website](#) to learn more about the [program](#) and to [register](#).

12. NIH ACD Meeting: June 13-14

In a [Federal Register notice](#), the NIH announced the next Advisory Committee to the Director meeting will be held June 13-14 at the National Institutes of Health, Natcher Building, Conference Room D, 45 Center Drive, Bethesda, MD 20892. Preliminary agenda items include: the NIH Director's Report, ACD Working Group Reports, and Other Business of the Committee.

Job Postings

PCORI Seeks Advisor, Public Policy

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute seeks an Advisor, Public Policy. Position responsibilities include: supporting outreach efforts to Congressional staff and external policymakers; supporting and coordinating messaging initiatives; supporting and coordinating projects for the Engagement Department; and more. Please visit the [job posting](#) to apply.

March of Dimes Seeks Director of Public Policy Research

March of Dimes seeks a Director of Public Policy Research. This individual would be responsible for generating policy analysis and documents, supporting the Advocacy and Government Affairs team by providing data and information, maintaining March of Dimes' profile in the policy research and academic community, and serving as an integral member of cross-departmental work and teams. Additional details and application information can be found [here](#).

ASHG Seeks Policy and Advocacy Manager

ASHG also seeks a Policy & Advocacy Manager help fulfill the Society's policy and advocacy functions by tracking, analyzing and drafting material on policy issues; staffing volunteer bodies to develop policy material and advocacy programming; helping to build and then manage advocacy activity of Society's leadership and membership; and strengthening relations with Congress. Please visit FASEB's [employment opportunities](#) site to learn more and to apply.

University of Florida Seeks Assistant Director of Federal Relations

The University of Florida Seeks an Assistant Director of Federal Relations for the Washington, D.C. office. Essential job functions include: manage and execute the government relations program for a portfolio of the University's federal interests; anticipate, monitor and analyze federal policy; and more. Details and application instructions are available on the [job posting site](#).

American Heart Association Seeks Regulatory Affairs Manager

Under the direction of the Vice President of Federal Advocacy, the [Regulatory Affairs Manager](#) would be responsible for monitoring, analyzing, and drafting responses to a prescribed set of federal regulatory and reimbursement-related issues that impact the association's public policy agenda. The primary focus of the AHA's regulatory work is with the Department of Health and Human Services and its key agencies.

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 or Tannaz Rasouli at trasouli@aamc.org.