



THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

May 11, 2020

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:

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities @APLU News May 5

Interested in thanking the essential workers who are supporting your community during the [#coronavirus](#) pandemic? Check out the tool a [@GeorgiaTech](#) student created to help give thanks and encouragement to those on the front-lines of the fight against the virus. <https://c.gatech.edu/3bOGFf4>

Senate HELP Holds Hearing on COVID Testing and Impacts to Research

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, testified before the [Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions \(HELP\) Committee](#) in a hearing focused on the development of new tests and increasing testing capacity. Collins described two ongoing NIH initiatives, Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) and Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines (ACTIV), aimed at quickly discovering and deploying COVID-19 diagnostics and vaccines.

“The goal is to help make millions of accurate and easy-to-use tests per week available to all Americans by the end of summer 2020, and even more in time for the flu season. To be completely honest, this is an ambitious goal,” Collins testified, and Senators agreed that reliable and widely available testing is needed to inform public health experts and prevent the continued spread of COVID-19.

Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) raised concerns about pre-COVID-19 research projects that have been put on hold and the scientists whose careers are at risk with the inability to conduct experiments. Collins shared Sen. Cassidy's concern for the research community and added, “If you add up what this is going to cost in terms of lost productivity and keeping people employed, the estimates are something like \$10 billion in NIH-funded research is going to disappear” because of lab closures.

Senate HELP Hearing on Returning to Work and School – May 12

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee [will hold a hearing](#) on Tuesday, May 12, at 10:00am titled, “COVID-19: Safely Getting Back to Work and Back to School.” National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci,

MD, will testify, along with representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, and Health and Human Services.

FY 2021 Labor-HHS Outside Witness Testimony

The Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee has posted instructions for submitting outside witness testimony for FY 2021. [According to the instructions](#), testimony should be no longer than four pages and sent to the Subcommittee no later than close of business May 22.

Task Force on American Innovation Letter to Congress on Research Recommendations

The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research joined a May 4 [Task Force on American Innovation coalition letter](#) to Congress, urging inclusion of “investments necessary to ensure the future health of the U.S. research enterprise in any additional coronavirus response legislation.” The group of nearly 20 organizations representing companies, business, education, and professional societies recommended that Congress provide additional funding for scientific research across federal science agencies, for maintaining and growing America’s STEM workforce, and for investing in essential research infrastructure.

Science: A Strategic Approach to COVID Vaccines

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, and National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) Director Anthony Fauci, MD, and others, co-authored a [May 11 Science Policy Forum article](#) describing the new collaborative ACTIV (Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines) public-private partnership. The authors detail ACTIV’s model to bring together all sectors involved in vaccine development in harmony to safely and rapidly develop a COVID-19 vaccine. The authors conclude, “To return to a semblance of previous normality, the development of SARS-CoV-2 vaccines is an absolute necessity. To achieve this goal, all the resources in the public, private, and philanthropic sectors need to participate in a strategic manner. The ACTIV public-private partnership and collaborative harmonized efficacy trials are enabling models to achieve our common goal.”

NIH Director’s Blog: Coronavirus Antibodies

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, authored a [May 7 blog post](#) describing recent studies on patients who recovered from COVID-19, and their development of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies. These studies indicate that nearly all COVID-19 patients develop antibodies within 20 days of first symptoms, but more research is needed to understand the long-term importance of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies. Dr. Collins concludes, “This study and others begin to piece together the complex puzzle of antibody-mediated immunity, it will be possible to learn more about the human body’s response to SARS-CoV-2 and home in on our goal of achieving safe, effective, and sustained protection against this devastating disease.”

WSJ: Medical Research is Locked Down, Too

Kevin Sheth, MD, authored a [May 4 op-ed in the Wall Street Journal](#) detailing the impact of COVID-19 on important clinical trials efforts for diseases such as stroke and Alzheimer’s, which have the potential to benefit millions of patients. Dr. Sheth estimates that up to 200,000 trials worldwide have been affected by COVID-19 and suggests that

researchers should use this time to consider alternative methods for conducting clinical trials in the future, to minimize the necessity of in-person interactions.

Open Mike: Extramural Investments in Research — FY 2019 by the Numbers

In a May 5 *Open Mike* [blog post](#), NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Michael Lauer, MD, performed his annual review of funding and other indicators from the [NIH Data Book](#), updated with information from FY 2019. For R01 equivalents, Dr. Lauer reports, “the application success rate was 21.0% (35,085 applications submitted with 7,366 awards). The average grant size and overall total spending for R01-equivalents increased in FY 2019, compared to the previous year, to \$548,390, (2.64% increase) and \$16.435 billion (6.92% increase), respectively.”

Under the Poliscope: Fostering Rigorous Research, Lessons Learned from NHP Models

On May 4, NIH released a [summary of a stakeholder workshop](#) in February on fostering rigor and reproducibility in research with nonhuman primates (NHPs). The summary is introduced by Carrie Wolinetz, PhD, NIH associate director for science policy in an [Under the Poliscope blog post](#). The report reaffirms the importance of NHP research for human health, emphasizing that ethical considerations extend beyond regulatory and legal requirements and that “rigor, husbandry, environment, and behavior are all interrelated.”

Requests for Public Comment

NCCIH Seeks Feedback on Strategic Plan – June 30

NIH’s National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) issued an April 27 [request for information](#) on the Center’s five-year strategic plan. According to the RFI, “The NCCIH is developing a new strategic plan to guide the Center’s research efforts and priority setting for 2021 through 2026. Seeking input into the strategic planning process is critical for identification and consideration of research areas and topics to be included in the new plan. NCCIH is requesting input in any or all of 9 topic areas.” [Comments are due](#) by June 30.

NIDDK Seeks Feedback on Strategic Plan – July 31

NIH’s National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) issued a March 16 [request for information](#) on the institute’s five-year strategic plan. According to the RFI, “The goal of the process is to develop a broad vision for accelerating research into the causes, prevention, and treatment of diseases and conditions within the Institute’s mission,” and focuses on five broad themes for community input. [Comments are due](#) by July 31.

NINDS Seeks Feedback on Strategic Planning Process

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) is embarking on an institute-wide strategic planning process, and published a [July 2019 request for information](#) on the process. The goal of the process is to tune its practices and policies to its vision and mission, in order to better serve and anticipate the needs of the research and patient communities and the public. The mission of NINDS is to seek fundamental

knowledge about the brain and nervous system and to use that knowledge to reduce the burden of neurological disease. Those interested in submitting comments for consideration as NINDS establishes a new strategic plan may still do so [through this form](#).

Upcoming Events

NIH OITE Hosts Webinar Series on Trainee Wellness – Week of May 11

The NIH's Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) continues to host various events focusing on trainee wellness and other career development topics, while trainees and researchers are working from home during the coronavirus pandemic. Upcoming webinars include [“Sharpening Your Mentoring Skills”](#) on May 13 from 2:00 – 4:00pm ET, [“Discussion for Building Resilience - Assertiveness, Self-confidence, & Imposter Fears”](#) on May 14 from 1:00 – 2:00pm ET, and [“Discussion for Building Resilience - Juggling Telework, Family, & Life”](#) on May 15 from 1:00 – 2:00pm ET. Visit the [OITE “Upcoming Events” page](#) for the full calendar.

Nominations Requested: 2020 Golden Goose Award to Recognize COVID-19 Research – May 22

The Golden Goose Award Steering Committee is requesting nominations for the 2020 award cycle to recognize individuals and teams whose federally funded research is contributing significantly to the response to COVID-19. The committee is seeking nominations that highlight outstanding scientific and technological research, originally focused elsewhere, that is now being redirected to address the COVID-19 pandemic. More information, including nomination criteria and the submission form, can be found [here](#). Nominations should be submitted by May 22, 2020.

NIH COVID-19 Resources

[NIH COVID-19 resource for applicants and grantees](#) including guidance for various aspects of research and grant application processes, as well as FAQs and COVID-19 funding opportunities.

[COVID-19 “Updates History” webpage](#) that details relevant updates for applicants and grantees by date.

[FAQ document on COVID-19 flexibilities](#) related to policies and programs affecting the grants process.

[HHS COVID-19 awards tracking website](#) including data on awards made by all HHS awarding agencies with supplemental appropriations provided through the first three COVID-19 supplemental packages (Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020; Families First Coronavirus Response Act; and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security [CARES] Act).

Job Postings

AAI Seeks Science Policy Analyst

The American Association of Immunologists (AAI), a non-profit professional biomedical research association, seeks a motivated and intellectually inquisitive individual to provide scientific expertise to the AAI public affairs program. This position supports the Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs, the members of the AAI Committee on Public Affairs, and other AAI staff in developing scientific and policy positions that convey the views, concerns, and interests of the AAI membership. Qualified candidates should submit a cover letter with resume, including publications, and salary requirements, to FASEB Human Resources at resumes@faseb.org, or visit the [FASEB employment website](#) to apply. [See attached](#) and the [FASEB job site](#) to view a detailed job description.

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.*