



THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ad Hoc Group Weekly COVID-19 Follow Up

May 14, 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) for inclusion in the publication!

Congressional and NIH News

House Democrats Introduce COVID-19 Supplemental Spending Bill

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and House Democratic leadership released text of the [Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions \(HEROES\) Act](#) (H.R. 6800) on May 12, a proposed fifth COVID-19 supplemental funding package. Included in the nearly \$3 trillion proposal is \$4.7 billion for NIH allocated as \$500 million to the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Disease and \$200 million to the National Institute on Mental Health for COVID-19-specific responses, as well as \$4.021 billion to the Office of Director of which \$3 billion should be used “for offsetting the costs related to reductions in lab productivity resulting from the coronavirus pandemic or public health measures related to the coronavirus pandemic.” The House is expected to vote on this package on May 15.

Senate HELP Hearing Investigates Return to Work, Fauci Testifies

National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Disease Director Anthony Fauci, MD, joined three additional federal officials in testifying before the [Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions \(HELP\) Committee on May 12](#) regarding the COVID-19 response. Dr. Fauci described NIH’s ongoing efforts with academic and industry partners to develop a COVID-19 vaccine, updating committee members that multiple vaccine candidates are in development. Dr. Fauci also expressed concern that returning to work, school, and normal activity too soon could cause “suffering and death that could be avoided — but could even set you back on the road to trying to get economic recovery.”

Bloomberg: NIH Director Discusses COVID-19 Vaccine Development

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, conducted a [May 11 interview with Bloomberg News](#) covering issues of COVID-19 vaccine development, clinical trials, and virus biology. Dr. Collins discussed the pros and cons of different types of vaccines in development, and shared optimism that two or three vaccines may be successfully developed. “I think we have exactly the right mix in this case: A couple of platforms that are very rapid, but potentially riskier, and also, as very solid backups, other platforms that we know can work

for other viruses. It's a horse race. We want all the horses to win, but we want to be sure there's plenty in the field," Collins described.

NIH COVID-19 Timeline

The May-June 2020 edition of NIH's Intramural research publication *The NIH Catalyst* includes a [COVID-19 timeline](#) of activities and events involving NIH. The timeline begins on January 23 with the first discussion of COVID-19 by NIH officials and goes on to include events such as the publication of research papers, clinical trial milestones, commentaries published by NIH officials, NIH initiatives, and clinical outcomes.

NIH Survey on COVID-19 and Rare Diseases

The NIH-supported Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN) launched an online survey to investigate COVID-19's impact on individuals with rare diseases and their families. NIH's [May 7 press release](#) describes RDCRN as a collaboration between 10 Institutes and Centers "focused on better understanding how rare diseases progress and developing improved approaches for diagnosis and treatment." Investigators hope to collect responses from at least 5,000 individuals to better understand how rare disease patients are receiving care, better understand COVID-19 impacts on mental health, and better estimate the COVID-19 disease burden in rare disease populations.

JAMA: COVID-19 and Racial/Ethnic Disparities

National Institutes of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) Director Eliseo Pérez-Stable, MD, co-authored a [May 11 JAMA Viewpoint](#) on the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on African American and Latino populations. The authors cite the most common explanations as a disproportionate burden of underlying comorbidities and living in more crowded urban conditions while being more likely to be employed in public-facing occupations. The authors suggest several studies to decrease the disease burden on African American and Latino populations, including a better understanding of community-level interventions, the influence of racism and other discrimination, and the role of social determinants of health in influencing COVID-19-related outcomes.

Science, STAT Address Challenges as Labs Reopen, Impacts on Young Investigators

A [May 6 report in Science](#) describes the challenges to reopening research labs including work shifts, deep cleaning, and prolonged social distancing that will characterize life in academic labs as the coronavirus pandemic continues.

Separately, a [STAT report from May 4](#) describes that closures have been especially difficult for early-career researchers. "Even when laboratories are reopened, it may take months to a year for research to resume as normal," author Justin Chen reports.

NIH Directors' Blog Posts on COVID-19

NIMH Director Joshua Gordon MD, PhD: [The Kindness of Strangers: Supporting Each Other During COVID-19](#)

NCATS Director Christopher Austin, MD: [Inspiring Progress on All Fronts in the Translational Science Fight Against COVID-19](#)

Ad Hoc Group Community COVID-19 Updates and Resources

Please share your organization's recommendation letters, sign-on letters, and resources related to COVID-19 with Christa Wagner (chwagner@aamc.org) for inclusion in the Thursday COVID-19 Follow Up!

EBSCO Open Access COVID-19 Information

EBSCO Information Services professionals have launched [a new free resource for researchers](#) and clinical professionals comprised of updated information related to COVID-19. Curators analyze data in real time to aggregate and condense updated information in one resource.

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).

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 ["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.

ASM Virtual Briefing on Genomics and the COVID-19 Response – May 20

Join the American Society for Microbiology for a virtual briefing: [The CDC SPHERES program: Harnessing the Power of Genomics to Bolster our COVID-19 Response](#) on

Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 1:00 pm. Hear from Dr. Greg Armstrong and Dr. Duncan McCannell about this unique national genomics consortium that is coordinating SARS-CoV-2 sequencing across the United States, and what it means for disease transmission, and vaccine and therapeutic development. RSVP to Mary Lee Watts at mwatts@asmusa.org.

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.

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.*