



## THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

### Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

August 10, 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:

#### Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research [@fundNIH](#) – August 6

Our progress against [#COVID19](#)—and every health threat we face—is built on the longstanding bipartisan commitment to medical research. 170+ orgs within the Ad Hoc Group urge no less than \$15.5B in [#researchrelief](#) for [@NIH](#) in the next supplemental package. <https://aamc.org/research/adhocgp/08.06.20letter.pdf>

#### Members of Congress, Ad Hoc Group Urge Support of NIH Emergency Funds

Congressional members showed bipartisan support for including \$15.5 billion in supplemental funding for the NIH in the next COVID-19 relief package. Rep. Katherine Clark (D-Mass.) and Rep. John Moolenaar (R-Mich.) [led 43 members of the House of Representatives](#), while Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) [led 21 senators](#) in a separate Aug. 6 letter outlining the importance of supporting the medical research enterprise amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

Over 180 members of the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research also [sent an August 6 letter](#) urging Congressional and White House leadership to include at least \$15.5 billion in emergency supplemental funds for NIH in the next COVID-19 emergency supplemental spending package. The letters were delivered a day before Congressional and White House leaders announced a stall in previously ongoing negotiations on the next COVID-19 emergency supplemental package.

#### House Majority Leader Announces Fall Schedule

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) on August 10 issued an updated [September schedule for the House of Representatives](#). According to the [schedule](#), committee work will occur beginning September 8, with the first votes scheduled for September 14. Regarding FY 2021 appropriations, Hoyer noted, “While the House acted last month to pass funding for nearly every government agency, the Senate has yet to advance a single appropriations measure. We cannot risk a government shutdown in the middle of a pandemic and an economic crisis. I hope Republicans will join us and act quickly to provide certainty that they will not shut the government down again.”

## **Charting a Rapid Course Toward Better COVID-19 Tests and Treatments**

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, authored an [August 6 blog post](#) sharing updates from the agency's various initiatives to develop better testing, diagnostics, and treatments for COVID-19. Dr. Collins summarized several new point-of-care and lab-based diagnostics in production, funded through the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) initiative. Collins also described recent advances in the ACTIV partnership, including progress in testing monoclonal antibodies as possible treatments for COVID-19. "NIH-funded researchers have been extremely busy over the past seven months, pursuing every avenue we can to detect, treat, and, ultimately, end this devastating pandemic. Far more work remains to be done, but as RADx and ACTIV exemplify, we're making rapid progress through collaboration and a strong, sustained investment in scientific innovation," Collins concluded.

## **New RADx Funding Opportunities**

The NIH on August 6 [released several Requests for Applications](#) for awards to be distributed through the RADx-rad (Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics-Radical) initiative. RADx-rad will be centrally aligned and coordinated to harmonize the data collection, storage, and management, providing an opportunity to further explore and identify additional approaches to understand coronavirus. Beyond the current crisis, it is anticipated that the technologies advanced through RADx-rad may also be applicable to other, yet unknown, infectious agents. Newly published funding opportunities include research into wastewater surveillance, novel SARS-CoV-2 screening tools for skin, mouth, and scent, and predicting disease severity in children.

## **New NIH Project to Identify Children at Risk for MIS-C**

The NIH on August 7 discussed a new research project into Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), a severe manifestation of COVID-19 in children, [in an NIH news release](#). The Predicting Viral-Associated Inflammatory Disease Severity in Children with Laboratory Diagnostics and Artificial Intelligence (PreVAIL) is funded through NIH's RADx initiative. According to the news release, "Studies funded through PreVAIL kids will evaluate genes and other biomarkers in COVID-19 pediatric cases, as well as examine how the virus interacts with its host and how the immune system responds. Researchers will rely on artificial intelligence and machine learning to sort and categorize the data they acquire to understand the disease patterns they uncover."

## **Explaining Operation Warp Speed**

The Department of Health and Human Services issued a [fact sheet on Operation Warp Speed](#), the inter-agency partnership, including NIH, to rapidly develop safe and effective SARS-CoV-2 countermeasures, such as a vaccine. The fact sheet includes background on the initiative's goal, agencies involved, and timeline of activities that have occurred. The fact sheet also discusses funding as well as manufacturing and distribution of the countermeasures.

## **Requests for Public Comment**

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### **Improving Biomedical Research Involving Animal Models – August 21**

The NIH seeks feedback from stakeholders on rigor and transparency in animal research, optimizing the relevance of animal models to human biology and disease, and the impact

of research culture in selecting animal models for research. Additional details are provided in the [request for information](#). Comments are due by August 21 and must be submitted electronically on the submission website: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/rfi/rfi.cfm?ID=108>.

### **OLAW Seeks Feedback on Semiannual Animal Inspections – October 22**

The NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare ([OLAW](#)) is seeking stakeholder input on flexibilities available for conducting semiannual animal facility inspections. Specifically, OLAW seeks input on flexibilities available to Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees for conducting semiannual inspections of their animal facilities. Additional details are provided in the [request for information](#). Comments must be [submitted electronically by October 22](#).

### **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**

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### **Inclusion Across the Lifespan Workshop – September 2**

NIH is hosting the second in a series of Inclusion Across the Lifespan workshops to provide lessons learned regarding the inclusion of pediatric and older populations in clinical studies, with evidence-based practical advice to the scientific community. The workshop will bring together individuals with a variety of backgrounds in clinical study development and execution, with focus on pediatric and geriatric populations, and consideration of special populations across the life course. The workshop will take place on Wednesday, September 2, from 10:30am – 5:30pm EST. [Please register in advance](#).

### **Virtual Rally for Medical Research – Sept. 16-17**

The Rally for Medical Research is held every September and includes more than 300 national organizations coming together in support of to call on our nation's policymakers to make funding for National Institutes of Health (NIH) a national priority and raise awareness about the importance of continued investment in medical research that leads to more progress, more hope, and more lives saved. This year's event will be held virtually on September 16-17. For more information and to register, please visit <https://rallyformedicalresearch.org>.

### **Virtual NIH Regional Seminar – October 27-30**

NIH is making plans for a [virtual regional seminar](#) on program funding and grants administration this fall. The event will take place from October 27-30. The agenda is currently under development, but a sample of potential sessions can be [found here](#). Registration details will be on the [Regional Seminars website](#) when available.

## NIH COVID-19 Resources

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[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.

[Funding opportunities specific to COVID-19](#) lists active and expired funding opportunities across NIH related to SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 research.

[HHS COVID-19 awards tracking website](#) including data on awards made by all HHS awarding agencies with supplemental appropriations.

## Job Postings

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### **ASM Seeks a Regulatory Affairs Specialist**

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM)'s Policy and Advocacy Department seeks an experienced Regulatory Affairs Specialist to strengthen its presence with federal agencies, specifically CMS and FDA, and proactively identify opportunities for ASM federal policy engagement on clinical and regulatory matters. This person will monitor, analyze, and report on regulatory activity that has the potential to affect the microbial sciences and clinical microbiology community in assigned policy areas, and work with ASM members and staff to develop position statements, testimony, and regulatory comments. View the full job description and [apply here](#). For more information about ASM, go to: [www.asm.org](http://www.asm.org)

**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).*