



## THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

### Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

August 17, 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:

#### **Office of Research, Boston University @BostonUResearch – August 6**

“Folks have only become more passionate about research. It's a reminder of how important our jobs are as scientists.” New video from BU's [@KilachandCenter](#) shows what the return to labs looks like under safety protocols and physical distancing guidelines: <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2020/amidst-a-pandemic-state-of-the-art-research-center-gets-reconfigured/>

#### **Ad Hoc Statement Urges Continued Negotiations on COVID-19 Relief**

The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research [issued an August 14 press statement](#) urging Congressional and White House leadership to resume negotiations on the next COVID-19 package, including funding for NIH. “Emergency funding for medical research supported by the NIH will maximize our nation’s capacity to address the current pandemic, take steps to prevent a recurrence of COVID-19 or the emergence of future pandemics, and sustain momentum for scientific and medical advancements related to a myriad of existing health threats facing Americans on a daily basis. Strengthening the federal commitment to research will work to improve people’s health, enhance the nation’s resilience, support our nation’s global competitiveness, and work to bolster the local and regional economic challenges our country is facing during this unprecedented time,” the statement says.

#### **Mapping Tool Highlights NIH-funded Small Business Successes**

The NIH released a new [interactive mapping tool](#) to showcase NIH-funded small businesses that are transforming health care, according to an [August 13 news release](#). The release notes, “Highlighting 50-plus small businesses across the United States, the interactive map links to the story behind health care products and services that the NIH small business program has supported through grants,” adding that over \$1 billion in small business funding is awarded every year. Map filters allow users to search for business stories by stage of development, NIH institute funding the research, woman- or minority-owned businesses, and congressional district.

#### **NIH Names New NIDCR Director**

The NIH on August 13 [announced the selection of Rena D'Souza, DDS, MS, PhD to be the next director of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research \(NIDCR\)](#). Dr. D'Souza is currently the assistant vice president for academic affairs and education for health sciences at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City as well as a professor of dentistry, the Ole and Marty Jensen Chair of the School of Dentistry and professor of neurobiology and anatomy, pathology and surgery in the School of Medicine and the Department of Biomedical Engineering. "Dr. D'Souza is renowned for her research in craniofacial development, genetics, tooth development and regenerative dental medicine," said NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD. "I look forward to having her join the NIH leadership team later this year," he added. Dr. D'Souza is expected to begin her new role as the NIDCR director later this year.

### **NIH Extends Flexibility for Receiving Preliminary Data as Post-Submission Material**

NIH Office of Extramural Research staff on August 14 [shared an update](#) that the temporary flexibility for applicants to submit preliminary data as post-submission materials for upcoming applications has been extended to apply to the May 2021 council. Additional details regarding the extension are available on the [NIH notice of extension](#). The temporary flexibility has been granted in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

### **NLM Shares Updates to PubMed**

Bart Trawick, PhD, director of the Customer Services Division at the National Library of Medicine's (NLM) National Center for Biotechnology Information summarized recent updates to NIH's PubMed in an [August 11 guest blog post](#). With over half a million users every day, PubMed is the most heavily used biomedical citation database in the world. Recent changes to PubMed increase its future sustainability through access to new databases, new data architecture, and a new interface.

### **Unprecedented Impact: Progress on Hold**

United for Medical Research (UMR) recently released [Part 3](#) in a series of fact sheets to examine the unprecedented impact that COVID-19 is having on biomedical research. While research on the disease caused by the novel coronavirus has been on a fast track the past several months, most other medical research ground to a halt in March and has yet to resume at anything near its pre-COVID pace. It is impossible to know the full implications of suspended work, lost experiments and delayed clinical trials, but for those waiting for a cure, time matters. Part 3 in the series profiles several researchers and the impact that COVID-19 is having on their work and the implications for patients.

### **Sign On Letter Supporting NASEM Study on Racism in Academia**

[The American Physiological Society is circulating a sign on letter](#) thanking House Science, Space, and Technology Committee Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas) for leadership in confronting inequities in the U.S. scientific enterprise that have prevented full participation of racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in STEM, and supporting [the call](#) for the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine to undertake a study to acknowledge and assess systemic racism in academia. If your organization would like to sign the letter, [please fill out this form](#) by August 28, 2020. If you have questions about the letter you may contact Rebecca Osthus at [ROsthus@physiology.org](mailto:ROsthus@physiology.org).

## **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).*