Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
January 4, 2021

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:

**Research!America @ResearchAmerica – December 29, 2020**

“Particularly in light of Covid-19, we’re going to need to catch up and build out in FY 22” - @jenlur of @ResearchAmerica. The recent supplemental spending package likely won’t make up for lost research. Read about impact of #COVID19 on agencies like @NIH: https://www.researchamerica.org/news-events/news/biomedical-research-advocates-eye-2022-nih-funding-boost.

President Signs FY 2021 Spending Bills, COVID-19 Relief into Law
President Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (H.R. 113) on December 27, 2020, including FY 2021 funding for the NIH along with all 12 FY 2021 spending bills and a $900 billion COVID-19 relief package. The bill includes a program level of $42.9 billion for the NIH, a $1.25 billion increase over the comparable FY 2020 spending level. The bill also provides $1.25 billion in emergency COVID-19 relief funding for the NIH through Sept. 30, 2024, divided as $1.15 billion for research and clinical trials related to long-term studies of COVID-19 and $100 million for the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) program.

Following House and Senate passage of the bill on December 21, the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research issued a press statement expressing appreciation that the bill includes some emergency funding for NIH and a FY 2021 investment for NIH that keeps pace with inflation in light of difficult discretionary spending constraints, and urging lawmakers to work quickly to provide additional emergency funding for the NIH in the new year.

117th Congress Begins, Pelosi Re-elected as House Speaker
The 117th Congress officially began on January 3, 2021 with the swearing in of new members and election for the Speaker of the House. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) was again elected House Speaker with 216 votes, for what will likely be her final term as Speaker (more in Roll Call). The majority party in the Senate will be determined by the two runoff elections taking place in Georgia on January 5.
The House is expected to vote on a new rules package on January 4 which includes a provision to exempt legislation related to COVID-19 relief and climate change from budget deficit calculations. According to CQ, the package “would provide the Budget Committee chairperson the authority to declare legislation providing economic and health responses to the pandemic, as well as measures designed to combat climate change, as having no cost.”

2021 Congressional Schedule Released
Both the House and the Senate have released legislative calendars for their respective chambers for 2021. The two calendars are combined into a pdf published by CQ Roll Call.

Peer-Reviewed Report on Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Publishes
Preliminary results from a Phase 3 clinical trial of the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine developed by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and Moderna confirm that the vaccine is nearly 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 symptoms, as reported in a December 30 NIH news release. The trial enrolled over 30,000 adults across the country and recorded over 400 symptomatic COVID-19 cases in the volunteers, with 22 cases identified in those who had received at least one of two doses of the vaccine. The report adds that more data is needed to determine if those vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 are still able to transmit disease to others.

NIH Study Uncovers Blood Vessel Damage and Inflammation In COVID-19 Patients’ Brains but No Infection
Researchers from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) reported research findings that patients who died of COVID-19 showed damage to blood vessels in the brain, as reported in a December 30 NIH news release. Researchers reported no evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection in brain tissue, rather that the brain damage “may be caused by the body’s inflammatory response to the virus,” said Avindra Nath, MD, clinical director at the NINDS. “We hope these results will help doctors understand the full spectrum of problems patients may suffer so that we can come up with better treatments," Nath added.

NIH Director Shares Pandemic Lessons Learned with WebMD
NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, described his coronavirus pandemic lessons learned, and personal impacts in a December 23 interview with WebMD. Collins highlighted the realization that researchers from all disciplines are able to come together “in new and creative collaborative arrangements and get things done a lot faster than people might have thought possible.” Collins also noted personally that his work schedule changed dramatically, but it has been a great opportunity to bring the “full power of science” into action on a once in a lifetime

Upcoming Events

Apply for HIV Clinical Training Opportunities – January 19
The HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) Foundation are accepting applications for the 2021 HIV Clinical Fellowship Program. For the first time, the program is supporting one year of HIV clinical training for full or half-time effort awards to allow greater flexibility for physicians to train in
community-based settings. The award supports a stipend of $33,000 for half-time training or $65,000 for full-time, plus funding to cover fringe benefits. Physicians whose communities are underrepresented in medicine or who interested in working in the Southeastern United States are strongly encouraged to apply. Program and application requirements are on the HIVMA website, including recommended competencies for HIVMA Clinical Fellows. The deadline to apply is Jan. 19, 2021. For more information, please email HIVMA.

**Apply for Medical Student HIV, Infectious Diseases Research Grants – February 5**
The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) Foundation and HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) seek applications for the G.E.R.M (Grants for Emerging Researchers/Clinicians Mentorship) Program for the 2021-2022 cycle. The program provides grants to medical students to support a mentored clinical learning and/or research project for up to a year, on infectious diseases and HIV related topics under the mentorship of an IDSA or HIVMA member. Applicants must be medical students (first, second or third year) from an accredited allopathic or osteopathic medical school in the U.S. Application information is available from the IDSA Foundation website. Awardees receive a $4,000 stipend to complete their project. The deadline to apply is February 5, 2021. Please email HIVMA staff with questions.

**SOBC Capstone Conference – February 22-23**
This capstone research conference will celebrate ten years of the NIH Science of Behavior Change (SOBC) Common Fund Program. The goal of the SOBC program is to advance behavior change research through a focus on mechanisms of change and the integration of basic research with applied/interventional research. The capstone conference will highlight innovative examples of behavior change research consistent with SOBC principles, from use-inspired basic research to mechanisms-focused intervention science. The capstone conference on February 22-23 will be virtual, open to the public, recorded, archived, and proceedings summarized in a publicly accessible report. The agenda, speaker information, and a link to registration will be available on this website in the coming months.

**NEW Apply for the Sarcoidosis Research Fellowship Grant – February 26**
Applications for 2021-2023 Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research's Fellowship Grant in the amount of $75,000 per year per fellow are due February 26. Additional details and a link to apply are on the Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research website.

**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.

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.

Combat COVID website including information for those who have never had COVID-19, have been infected, have recovered, and for health care providers.

Job Postings

AAMC Seeks Senior Science Policy Analyst
The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) seeks a Sr. Science Policy Specialist, to work closely with leadership in the Scientific Affairs team to provide up-to-date information on policy developments affecting biomedical research at member medical schools and teaching hospitals, prepare presentations and communications, and assist in the development of positions and responses to federal requests, especially on National Institutes of Health (NIH) matters. Key issue areas include medical/clinical research infrastructure, training and workforce development and on the issues promoting diversity and combatting sexual harassment in the STEMM workforce. Please visit the full job post for more information and to apply.

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.