

## Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – January 23, 2017

Each week, the Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up will feature hashtags and/or tweets suggested by members of the NIH advocacy community. We encourage all readers who are active on social media to use these messages, and welcome suggestions from the community for future issues of the Weekly Round-Up.

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### 1. Update on NIH Director

The NIH indicated on Jan. 19 that the resignation letter that NIH Director Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., had submitted to the incoming administration had been returned to him and that he is being held over into the next administration. No additional details were immediately available. Several press outlets reported the news, including [Science](#), the [Washington Post](#), and [Nature](#).

### 2. HHS Secretary Confirmation Hearings

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee hosted a courtesy [confirmation hearing](#) on Jan. 18 for President Trump's nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services, Rep. Tom Price, M.D. (R-Ga.). In his prepared testimony, Dr. Price lauded "real heroes at this department doing incredible work to keep our food safe, to develop new drugs and treatment options – driven by scientists conducting truly remarkable research." Medical research also came up in a question from Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), who characterized the issue as "a passion" of hers, and noted, "If we invest in biomedical research, we have the possibility of not only improving lives for Americans and cheering for coming up with an effective treatment for devastating diseases, but also lowering health care costs." She asked Dr. Price, "Do you support the increases for NIH that we have passed in the last year and are on track to pass this year as well?" Dr. Price responded, "NIH is a treasure for our country in the kind of the things we should be doing to find cures for those diseases. One of the core avenues to be able to make that happen is through NIH, and I supported the increase."

Dr. Price also is [scheduled to testify](#) before the Senate Finance Committee on Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 10 a.m. in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building. Unlike the HELP Committee, the Finance Committee must approve Dr. Price's nomination before it can advance to the full Senate.

### 3. OMB Director Confirmation Hearings

Also on Tuesday, Jan. 24, two other Senate committees are scheduled to hold hearings on the nomination of Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-S.C.) to lead the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The Senate Budget Committee [will meet at 10:30 a.m.](#) in 608 Dirksen Senate Office Building, and the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will [hold its hearing at 2:30 p.m.](#) in 342 Dirksen.

#### **4. House Appropriations to Hold Organizational Meeting**

The full House Appropriations Committee is scheduled to hold an [organizational meeting](#) for the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress on Tuesday, Jan. 24 at 11:30 a.m. in 2359 Rayburn House Office Building.

#### **5. Op Ed: Cutting Through Red Tape to Advance Science**

In a [Jan. 19 op ed](#) in the *Salem News*, Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) described his support for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act and described the progress and potential of medical research to improve health and quality of life. He opens the piece observing, “The advances made by the scientific and medical communities over the past few decades have been incredible,” describing improvements in life expectancy and progress in cancer research. He also notes, “But even with that progress, there is still so much work to do ... For the sake of these millions of families who are waiting for cures, we’ve got to make sure that our scientists are able to continue pursuing new knowledge and new technologies.” Additionally, he specifically highlights the role of NIH, pointing out, “Nearly \$700 million of this research is done right here in Ohio every year at world-renowned universities like the Ohio State University and Case Western Reserve University and the University of Cincinnati.”

*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 Joe Bañez at [jbanez@aamc.org](mailto:jbanez@aamc.org) or Tannaz Rasouli at [trasouli@aamc.org](mailto:trasouli@aamc.org).*