

## Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – February 4, 2019

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:

### [Coalition for the Life Science @CLS Advocates](#)

The CLS is thrilled to [announce @RepJohnCurtis](#) as the newest co-chair on the Cong. Biomedical Research Caucus. He joins [@RepSpeier](#) [@RepSteveStivers](#) [@RepCohen](#)

#### **1. House Appropriations Committee Memberships Announced**

House Appropriations Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) Jan. 31 announced the Appropriations Subcommittee Vice Chairs for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.) will serve as the Vice Chair for Labor-HHS, and the full list can be seen [here](#).

House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Kay Granger (R-Texas) [Jan. 29 also announced](#) Republican Appropriations Subcommittee assignments for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

#### **2. CQ: President's Budget Request Expected Week of March 11**

CQ News Feb. 4 [reported](#) that the president's FY2020 budget request is expected to be issued the week of March 11 (subscription required). The report shares that "the budget will propose that nondefense spending be held at the level of next year's nondefense cap, which is \$55 billion or 9 percent below fiscal 2019 levels. That would be in keeping with past Trump budget requests."

#### **3. Grassley Seeks More Information on Foreign Threats to US Research Institutions**

Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) Jan. 17 [sent letters](#) to the [Department of Justice and FBI](#) as well as the [Department of Health and Human Services Inspector General](#) to "[request] information about the threats posed by foreign actors seeking to steal U.S. intellectual property by exploiting U.S. research institutions and the vetting processes in place regarding researchers and public grants and the steps the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the DOJ and the HHS IG take to ensure the integrity of taxpayer-funded research." These letters follow the Senator's October 2018 letter to NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, regarding foreign threats to research integrity, and NIH's subsequent response in January.

#### **4. NDD United Sign-On Opportunity**

Sequestration will again become a part of the appropriations discussion as the temporary and partial relief of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 expires at the end of FY 2019. In the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, threats to nondefense discretionary programs face a steep, \$55 billion funding cliff that would reverse many of the funding gains made in the last few years.

In an effort to protect NDD programs from further cuts and to end sequestration, NDD United is circulating a sign-on letter urging lawmakers to negotiate a new budget agreement providing relief from the discretionary spending caps in FYs 2020 and 2021. The Ad Hoc Group has signed on to the letter, and we encourage individual organizations to do so as well. You can review the letter [here](#) and [complete the sign on form here](#). Deadline to sign on is Feb.14.

## **5. *Politico*: State of the Union to Address An End to the HIV Epidemic in the US**

According to a [Feb. 3 piece in Politico](#), the president's Feb. 5 State of the Union address is expected to "promise an end to the HIV epidemic in America" by 2030. This strategy is said to include efforts from CDC and HHS, with the goal of ending new infections over the next 10 years.

## **6. *Politico*: Health Agencies Collaborate to Combat Loneliness**

A [Jan. 25 story in Politico](#) features an interview with NCATS Director Christopher Austin, MD, about a developing partnership between NASA, HHS, and NIH. Dr. Austin notes, "A lot of the things that affect humans on Earth slowly affect astronauts much more rapidly. That's a real problem for NASA, but it's a real opportunity for us...to study these disorders on a time scale that would take years and years on Earth."

## **7. *NYT*: Music Therapy for Mental Illness**

The *New York Times* Jan. 29 [published a story](#) highlighting a new partnership between NIH and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to use music to improve mental health. NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, described the Sound Health: Music and the Mind partnership as a way to "[bring] neuroscientists together with musicians to speak each other's language" in order to better understand and treat mental health disorders.

## **8. *Under the Poliscope*: Investing in Bioethics Research to Inform Science Policy**

In an *Under the Poliscope* [blog post](#), NIH Acting Chief of Staff and Associate Director for Science Policy Carrie Wolinetz, PhD, explained the rationale behind the Dec. 12, 2018 [advanced notice](#) announcing the NIH's intention to fund bioethics research. Dr. Wolinetz described NIH's desire to continue creating a body of evidence "to ensure that our ethical responsibilities are not outpaced by our science" and noted previous work done by NIH in bioethics.

## **9. *NYT* Editorial on Gene Editing in Human Embryos**

The *New York Times* editorial board Jan. 28 [addressed](#) the question, "Should researchers agree to a moratorium on any human [germline] genome editing...or should they simply tighten existing criteria?" The article suggests several ways to broaden the conversation, including diversifying the deciders, engaging the public, and using existing levers of control. [STAT](#) Jan. 24 informed readers that National Academy of Medicine President Victor Dzau, MD, announced plans to create an international commission on the topic at the January [World Economic Forum](#). Related, [NPR](#) reported on basic developmental biology research by Dieter Egli, PhD, of Columbia University Medical Center, who is modifying DNA in human embryos. The article notes there is very little development allowed in the embryos now, but in the future, Dr. Egli "would likely allow edited embryos to develop further to continue his research."

## **Upcoming Hill Briefings and Other Events**

### **1. NAM Webinar on Action Collaborative Countering Opioid Epidemic – Feb. 13**

The National Academy of Medicine (NAM) is hosting a [free webinar](#): "An Introduction to the Action Collaborative on Countering the US Opioid Epidemic" on February 13 from 4:00-5:00pm.

The webinar will describe the Collaborative's work towards better coordination, information-sharing, and evidence-based practice of the many efforts being taken to fight the opioid epidemic. The overview will be followed by updates from the Collaborative's four working groups and a Q&A.

## **2. AdvaMedDx and ACS CAN Congressional Briefing – Feb. 14**

AdvaMedDx and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) invite you to a congressional briefing titled “Accelerating Global Elimination of Cervical Cancer: A Call to Action.” The briefing will cover how, with U.S. investment and leadership, we can accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer death globally, saving hundreds of thousands of lives. The briefing will take place from 12-1:30pm on Feb. 14 in 2017 Rayburn House Office Building. Please [RSVP by Feb. 12](#) and see attached for additional information.

## **3. AAMC/FASEB Webinar on NAS’s Next Generation of Researchers Report – Feb. 19**

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) are hosting the fourth webinar in their 2018/2019 National Academies reports [webinar series](#). Program Officer Lida Beninson, PhD, of the National Academies, will unpack the key findings of the report “[The Next Generation of Biomedical and behavioral Sciences Researchers Breaking Through](#).” The webinar is being held on Feb. 19, 1:00-2:00 PM ET and free [registration](#) is required.

## **4. NCATS Hosting its Rare Disease Day – Feb. 28**

The NIH's National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) with the NIH Clinical Center is hosting [Rare Disease Day](#) on Feb. 28 on the NIH campus in Bethesda, MD. The annual event is intended to raise awareness about these diseases, the people they affect, and new research opportunities through panel discussions, posters, artwork, tours, and networking opportunities. Speakers include NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD; NCATS Director Christopher Austin, MD; and NIH Clinical Center CEO James Gilman, MD. Admission is complimentary and open to the public. On February 22, NIH will host a Twitter chat on rare diseases from 1-2 PM ET featuring Drs. Collins, Austin, and Gilman as well as representatives from the rare diseases advocacy community.

## **Job Postings**

### **SfN Seeks Communications Specialist (Advocacy)**

The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) is searching for a Communications Specialist who will oversee the communication and positioning of SfN and its policy positions, as well as activities related to grassroots and federal advocacy priorities in order to generate awareness about the value of brain research and to enhance the leadership stature of the Society. More details and application instructions are available on the [SfN website](#).

### **Academy for Radiology & Biomedical Imaging Seeks Director of Communications and Membership**

The Academy is seeking an experienced professional for a Director of Communications and Membership, to maintain and improve organizational branding and messaging for internal and external communications. This position will work with a two-person communications staff to create and execute a range of activities intended to raise awareness of our mission and work,

as well as the state of policy and grassroots efforts to our membership. Please see attached for additional information. Applications can be sent to [ETownley@acadrad.org](mailto:ETownley@acadrad.org).

### **NIA Seeks Analyst to Join the Office of Legislation, Policy, and International Activities**

The Office of Legislation, Policy, and International Activities (OLPIA) at the National Institute on Aging (NIA) is planning to recruit a Health Science Policy Analyst to facilitate critical communications with a wide range of internal and external NIA audiences and stakeholders, provide external relations support to NIA leadership, and augment office capabilities across a wide range of aging research-related activities. View the [posting](#) for details and to apply.

### **ALS Seeks Associate Director, Grassroots Advocacy**

The Associate Director, Grassroots Advocacy will report to the Vice President, Public Policy and work as part of a team with the Associate Director for Government Affairs and the Public Policy Manager. The successful candidate will design and direct nonpartisan grassroots activities, including managing an annual Fly-In and the National ALS Advocacy Conference and working with ALS chapters and volunteer leaders. [Apply here](#).

### **PCORI Seeks Associate Director, Public Policy**

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute seeks an Association Director, Public Policy. Position responsibilities include: supporting the Director for Public Policy and Government Relations, Chief Engagement and Dissemination Officer, and the PCORI Board of Governors and executives in representing PCORI with Congress; and more. Please visit the [job posting](#) to apply.

### **FASEB Seeks Senior Science Policy Analyst**

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology seeks a Senior Science Policy Analyst. Primary functions of the role include analyzing science policy issues and independently managing committees, projects, reports, and seminars/workshops pertaining to the training and development of the biological and biomedical workforce and more. Please visit FASEB's [employment opportunities](#) site for [additional information](#) and a [link to apply](#).

### **ASHG Seeks Two Policy and Advocacy Positions**

The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) seeks a Policy & Advocacy Assistant to help fulfill the Society's advocacy role by helping to develop advocacy resources for members; supporting the development of policy statements; and coordinating policy and advocacy-related events and other administrative duties. Please visit FASEB's [employment opportunities](#) site for [additional information](#) and a [link to apply](#).

ASHG also seeks a Policy & Advocacy Manager help fulfill the Society's policy and advocacy functions by tracking, analyzing and drafting material on policy issues; staffing volunteer bodies to develop policy material and advocacy programming; helping to build and then manage advocacy activity of Society's leadership and membership; and strengthening relations with Congress. Please visit FASEB's [employment opportunities](#) site to learn more and to apply.

### **University of Florida Seeks Assistant Director of Federal Relations**

The University of Florida Seeks an Assistant Director of Federal Relations for the Washington, D.C. office. Essential job functions include: manage and execute the government relations program for a portfolio of the University's federal interests; anticipate, monitor and analyze federal policy; and more. Details and application instructions are available on the [job posting site](#).

**American Heart Association Seeks Regulatory Affairs Manager**

Under the direction of the Vice President of Federal Advocacy, the [Regulatory Affairs Manager](#) would be responsible for monitoring, analyzing, and drafting responses to a prescribed set of federal regulatory and reimbursement-related issues that impact the association's public policy agenda. The primary focus of the AHA's regulatory work is with the Department of Health and Human Services and its key agencies.

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).