Ad Hoc Group Weekly COVID-19 Follow Up
February 11, 2021

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be publishing an additional weekly update focused on COVID-19 to highlight related NIH actions and guidance as well as activities from the Ad Hoc Group community and general updates. As always, please forward any relevant items to Christa Wagner (chwagner@aamc.org) for inclusion in the publication!

Congressional and NIH News

House Energy & Commerce to Mark Up Reconciliation Bill
The House Energy and Commerce committee is marking up the committee’s reconciliation text on February 11. The committee released text of the package on February 9, including public health provisions under Subtitle A. Text of the package does not explicitly direct funds towards the NIH, but does provide $5.2 billion to the Secretary of Health and Human Services for COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics supply chain, including for research and development purposes.

Senate Appropriations Ranking Member to Retire in 2022
Senator Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, announced on Feb. 8 that he will retire at the end of his current term in 2022, reported Politico. Shelby most recently served as the committee’s chairman until the Democrats regained the majority in the Senate following the Georgia runoff elections. Shelby is currently serving his sixth term and is the fourth most senior member in the Senate.

President Biden to Visit NIH on February 11
President Joe Biden is expected to visit the NIH at 4:30pm on February 11 for a tour of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Vaccine Research Center, and to receive a briefing with updates on NIH-supported COVID-19 research. The visit can be viewed live on the NIH Twitter account and YouTube page. President Biden’s visit follows Vice President Kamala Harris’ visit to receive her second COVID-19 vaccine dose, and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden’s virtual visit with National Cancer Institute (NCI) researchers on World Cancer Day.

NIH Calls for Greater Inclusion of Pregnant and Lactating People In COVID-19 Vaccine Research
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Diana Bianchi, MD, co-authored a JAMA Viewpoint discussing the decisions pregnant and lactating women are making on whether or not to get the COVID-19 vaccine based on limited scientific
evidence, reported an NIH news release on February 10. Dr. Bianchi and colleagues suggest that reducing barriers to including pregnant and lactating people in clinical research will improve decision-making in their medical care. “Pregnant and lactating persons should not be protected from participating in research, but rather should be protected through research,” conclude the authors.

**NCI Director’s Blog: 50th Anniversary of the National Cancer Act**

National Cancer Institute (NCI) Director Norman “Ned” Sharpless, MD, reflected on First Lady Jill Biden’s recent virtual visit to NCI in recognition of World Cancer Day, and shared NCI’s plans to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the National Cancer Act in a February 8 blog post. The theme, “Nothing will stop us,” will be emphasized in NCI’s planned activities with various stakeholders and members of the cancer community throughout 2021. “This theme is emblematic of the barriers we’ve overcome and the commitment to overcome those we will undoubtedly face in the future,” said Sharpless.

**Upcoming Events**

**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.

**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.

**NEW World Glaucoma Day Virtual Briefing – March 11**

The Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR) is co-hosting a virtual Congressional briefing in recognition of World Glaucoma Day on March 11 at 12:00pm EST titled, “Glaucoma: Clinical Practice and Research to Optimize Patient Outcomes.” Please see attached for additional information, and RSVP to Dina Beaumont @ 202-407-8325 or dinabeau@aol.com.

**21st Century Cures Act: Update on Implementation - March 11**

The NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) is co-hosting a webinar with the United States Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration to provide updates on the agencies’ progress in implementing measures of the 21st Century Cures Act related to laboratory animals. The webinar will be posted here on March 11.

**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.

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**Job Postings**

**NEW** **NHLBI Seeks Science Policy Analyst**

NIH's National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) seeks a Science Policy Analyst to assist in the institute's engagement with Congress. The analyst's role will include reviewing proposed legislation, responding to Congressional inquiries, preparing public outreach materials, and more. Additional information and instructions for applying can be found here.

**AAI Seeks Science Policy Analyst**

The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) seeks a Science Policy Analyst to research, analyze, and respond to relevant issues involving biomedical research, NIH, and other federal agencies, and to assist with AAI science policy programs and advocacy activities. For further information or to apply, click here.

**AACR Seeks Associate Director, Science and Health Policy**

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) seeks an Associate Director, Science and Health Policy. The Associate Director, Science and Health Policy, will work to strengthen the dialogue between policymakers, scientists, and advocates, as well as support policies to advance cancer research and improve patient care and public health. This individual will provide specialized expertise on science and health policy issues that are important to AACR leadership, with a primary focus on tobacco control policy and a secondary science or health policy focus to be determined, depending on the candidate's experience. More information on the opening can be found here.
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.