Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

February 22, 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:

University of Florida Health @UFHealth – February 16

Tune in Feb. 18 at 10 p.m. ET to see @nataliexdean in a new special, The Vaccine: #ConqueringCovid, on @Discovery and @discoveryplus. She joins experts, including Dr. Anthony Fauci of @NIAIDNews and Dr. Francis Collins of @NIH, to discuss the incredible race for a COVID vaccine.

Senate Hearings Scheduled for HHS Secretary Nominee

Xavier Becerra, President Biden’s nominee to be Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, will appear before two Senate committees during the week of February 22. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee will hold a hearing on February 23 at 10:00am EST, and the Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing on February 24 at 2:00pm EST. The nominee must be approved by the Finance Committee before full Senate consideration. The NIH is a part of HHS.

New NIAMS Director Sworn In

Lindsey Criswell, MD, MPH, DSc, was sworn in as the next director of the National Institute of Arthritis, Diabetes, Digestive, and Kidney Diseases (NIAMS) on February 16. Dr. Criswell is a board-certified rheumatologist, and prior to joining NIAMS, was vice chancellor of research at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). In her first
letter to the NIAMS community, Criswell shared her excitement to collaborate with the NIAMS community to "enhance and advance our Institute's work."

**Director’s Blogs: Power of Genomic Surveillance and Impacts of Variants on Treatment Responses**

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, authored two recent blog posts about SARS-CoV-2 variants. In a February 18 post, Collins summarized a South African research study showing the power of genomic surveillance based on early tracking of SARS-CoV-2 variants across that country, showing that three variants caused over 40% of all infections, and entered the country early in the pandemic. “Genomic surveillance has remarkable power for understanding the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 … to identify new variants of SARS-CoV-2 and to develop timely measures to control the spread of the virus,” said Collins.

In a separate February 9 blog post, Collins discussed mapping of the SARS-CoV-2 mutations within the virus protein structure, allowing researchers to better understand which variants will resist antibody treatments.

**NIH News Release: To End HIV Epidemic, We Must Address Health Disparities**

The Lancet HIV in the USA Series, part of the Health and Human Services initiative Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America and partially funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), published its first report on February 19 wrote the NIH in a February 18 news release. “Scientific advances have transformed the course of HIV in individuals. To transform the course of the epidemic, we need to expand care and prevention strategically to those who need it most,” said NIDA Director Nora D. Volkow, MD, referencing the report’s recommendation of allocating resources to areas hardest-hit by the HIV epidemic, “especially the U.S. South, where 52% of new HIV transmissions occurred in 2018 despite being home to only 37% of the U.S. population.”

**Open Mike: Update on New NIH RePORTER**

NIH Deputy Director of Extramural Research Michael Lauer, MD, shared updates on new features of the NIH’s revamped RePORTER website in a February 16 Open Mike blog post. Lauer described the new MyRePORTER took to save searches and receive email alerts about newly funded projects or publications related to your issue areas of interest. NIH also produced a short MyRePORTER tutorial video.

**Open Mike: Progress Towards a Modernized ClinicalTrials.gov**

Rebecca Williams, PharmD, MPH, acting director of ClinicalTrials.gov at the National Library of Medicine, guest authored a February 16 post on the Open Mike blog to share
upcoming stakeholder activities hosted by the NLM related to the roadmap for clinicaltrials.gov modernization. Williams summarized NLM’s activities to date, including reviewing responses from a 2020 Request for Information, key stakeholder groups identified, and how NLM is looking forward to implementing updates on ClinicalTrials.gov.

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.

NEW Tracking COVID-19 Variants: The Role of Genomic Surveillance – February 23

As SARS-CoV-2 has spread around the world for the last year, the virus has begun to mutate and new strains are emerging that have raised concerns among scientists, public health experts, policymakers and the public. What can we do and what does this mean for our efforts to bring the pandemic under control? As the COVID-19 pandemic challenges continue to evolve, and as new SARS-CoV-2 variants emerge, we must bolster CDC’s surveillance and sequencing abilities to better identify, track, and mitigate the impact of these new strains.

The American Society for Microbiology invites you to join us on Tuesday, Feb. 23 from 12:00 – 1:00 pm Eastern for a briefing, “Tracking COVID-19 Variants: The Role of Advanced Molecular Detection and Genomic Surveillance." Register here. Questions? Contact Mary Lee Watts at mwatts@asmusa.org.

NEW Care Interventions for Persons Living with Dementia and Their Caregivers Report Webinar – February 23

On February 23, 2021 from 2:00pm to 3:00pm ET, join the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine for a webinar releasing a new report on care interventions for persons living with dementia and their care partners and caregivers.
The report assesses the state of evidence on care interventions to support persons living with dementia and their care partners and caregivers, and informs decision making about which interventions are ready to be broadly disseminated and implemented. It also offers a blueprint to guide future research. For more information, please visit the NASEM study page, and you can register for the webinar here.

**NEW** Coalition to Advance Maternal Therapeutics Briefing - February 24

You are invited to a virtual Capitol Hill Briefing, “COVID-19 and the Imperative to Include Pregnant and Lactating People in Clinical Trials.” The event will focus on the need to increase inclusion of pregnant and lactating people in clinical trials using the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as a case study. NICHD Director Diana Bianchi will be featured in the event, which will take place Wednesday, February 24, 3:30 – 4:30 PM EST. Click here for more information. Register here.

**NEW** COVID-19 Research in States with Rural and Underserved Populations – February 26

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) is hosting an upcoming webinar, COVID-19 Research in States with Rural and Underserved Populations: Highlights from the IDeA Program. The Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Program strengthens research capacity in states that receive less NIH funding. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program’s grantees have been conducting invaluable research and this webinar will feature three examples of the important work. The webinar will take place on Friday, February 26, from 2:00 – 3:00 pm EST. Please register here.

**NEW** NIH ACD Special Meeting on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - February 26

The NIH Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) will hold a special meeting with updates on NIH Workforce Plans to Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Biomedical Research. The meeting will be webcast on February 26 from 3:00 - 5:30 pm EST. 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** Virtual Briefing: Understanding Sex and Gender in Research – March 2

The Society for Women's Health Research and the Endocrine Society are hosting a virtual Congressional briefing to highlight the importance of sex and gender in biomedical
research. Please see here for more information, and register via Zoom to attend the briefing on March 2 at 2pm EST.

**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.

**NEW 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.

NIH COVID-19 Research Website provides a central location for trusted, up-to-date, accurate information about NIH research and our strategic role in 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

**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.

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*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.*