Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
March 1, 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:

**Virginia Commonwealth University @VCU – February 24**

@FLOTUS @DrBiden visited @VCUMassey labs today, then met with scientists, health care providers and community leaders about tackling cancer disparities. "Cancer has taken more lives of our friends and families than we could ever imagine," she said.

https://www.news.vcu.edu/article/First_lady_Jill_Biden_a_longtime_advocate_for_cancer_education

**House Appropriators Announce Process for Earmarks in FY 2022**

House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) announced guidelines for the use of earmarks in the FY 2022 appropriations process in a February 26 press release. In describing the new Community Project Funding, DeLauro said, “Our bipartisan reforms will produce a small number of projects with strong community support, a transparent process where no member’s family can benefit and where projects are audited to ensure money was spent as planned.”

New guidelines for the Community Project Funding include: requests for funding must be made online with a maximum of 10 per member and will be publicly available; Community Project Funding will be capped at 1% of discretionary spending; funding will not be available for for-profit entities; and requests must demonstrate community support. The Senate has not yet outlined its plans to accept earmarks in the FY 2022 process, though Senate Appropriations Chair Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) indicated that negotiations between the House and Senate are ongoing, as reported February 26 in Roll Call.

**NIH: Third COVID-19 Vaccine Approved by FDA**

The NIH posted a news release on February 27, following the FDA’s emergency use authorization (EUA) of a COVID-19 vaccine from Johnson and Johnson, the third vaccine to receive an EUA from the FDA. NIH’s National Institute on Allergy and Infectious Diseases provided supported late-stage clinical testing of the vaccine. “To have a third vaccine that meets the expectations of an EUA for safety and effectiveness at preventing severe disease and death from COVID-19 brings us one step closer to protecting the American public, staying ahead of concerning viral variants, and finding our way out of the pandemic. I would like to
thank the clinical staff who conducted the clinical trials of the vaccine as well as the thousands
of study participants who helped us find the scientific answers necessary to reach this
important day,” stated NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD.

NIH ACD Meets to Discuss Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Research
The Advisory Council to the Director (ACD) of the NIH met in a public meeting on February 26
to discuss NIH’s efforts to promote diversity and inclusion. The meeting covered the NIH’s
new UNITE Initiative, which aims to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion in biomedical
research, an update from the Working Group on Diversity including presentation of the groups
Racism in Science report, and two Common Fund concepts for funding, which were approved
unanimously. Presentations and a recording of the webcast are available on the NIH ACD
website.

CNN: Repurposing Drugs to Treat Covid-19
A February 28 report in CNN detailed research efforts and clinical trials to investigate the
opportunity to repurpose drugs already approved by the FDA for use in combatting COVID-19.
NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, discussed the role of the public-private partnership
ACTIV (Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines) in identifying drugs
to investigate for repurposing, of which about 20 have already been tested for efficacy against
COVID-19

Study Identifies Cardiovascular Risk Factors That May Lead to Pregnancy
Problems for First-Time Moms
Researchers from NIH’s National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) contributed to new
research indicating that first-time mothers with cardiovascular disease indicators may be at
higher risk for pregnancy complications, as described in a February 26 NIH news release. The
nuMoM2b Hearth Health Study followed nearly 4,500 women for up to seven years after
giving birth, and found that women with a pregnancy complication were more likely to develop
indicators for heart disease during their pregnancy, such as higher blood glucose levels,
hypertension, and higher levels of inflammation. The researchers suggested patients receiving
prenatal care and pregnant patients should be screened for heart disease

Mock Study Section: Ever Wondered What Happens During the Scientific
Review of an NIH Grant Application?
NIH’s Office of Extramural Research posted a video, NIH Peer Review: “Live” Mock Study
Section, to share the study section review process of submitted grant applications. Viewers
will learn how applications are scored, questions commonly asked by reviewers, and mistakes
to avoid in the grant writing process.

Upcoming Events

**NEW** NIH, NCATS Rare Disease Day Event – March 1
Sponsored by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) and Clinical
Center at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Rare Disease Day at NIH aims to raise
awareness about rare diseases, the people they affect, and NIH research collaborations
underway to address scientific challenges and to advance new treatments. Visit the event
main page to see the full agenda and register to view in the public webcast.

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.

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.

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.