



## THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

### Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

March 16, 2020

Each week, the Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up will feature hashtags and/or tweets (follow us at [@fundNIH](https://twitter.com/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:

#### **National Alliance on Mental Illness @NAMICommunicate March 13**

We recognize that people living with mental illness face additional challenges dealing with [#COVID19](https://twitter.com/COVID19), as do their caregivers and loved ones - That's why we just released guide with FAQs on a variety of topics. Read here: <https://bit.ly/3aWD1Pp>

#### **House Outside Witness Hearing Canceled, Written Testimony to be Accepted**

The House Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee has canceled its scheduled March 24 outside witness hearing but encourages external organizations to submit outside witness testimony by close of business on March 23. Please see instructions for testimony submission on the [subcommittee website](#).

#### **House Members Send Letter to Appropriators Requesting \$44.7 Billion for NIH in FY 2021**

Representatives Susan Davis (D-Calif.), David McKinley (R-W.Va.), Andre Carson (D-Ind.), Peter King (R-N.Y.) and 230 bipartisan Members of the House of Representatives March 11 [sent a letter](#) to Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) and Ranking Member Tom Cole (R-Okla.) of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies requesting that the NIH program level for FY 2020 be "at least \$44.7 billion."

#### **NIH Provides for Administrative Flexibility in Projects Affected by COVID-19**

The week of March 9, NIH released a series of notices to help researchers and administrators manage grants-related obligations while their institutions respond to disruptions from COVID-19. The [first notice](#) reminds investigators that the NIH will consider late applications if a recipient's organization is closed or unable to submit an application on time due to public health or other emergencies. An [FAQ notice](#) provides information for managing proposals and awards in an emergency, such as the ability to recover expenses for travel or for attending a conference that was unavoidably cancelled. In a [third announcement](#), the NIH, in cooperation with HHS and OMB, details further

flexibility in requirements governing the reimbursement of expenses and salaries on research projects. Please visit NIH's [extramural research](#) resource for responding to natural disasters, and NIH's [Grants and Funding page](#) on COVID-19.

### **Commentary: Curing HIV and Sickle Cell Falls Short If Vulnerable are Left Out**

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, authored a March 8 [commentary in \*Fortune\* magazine](#) describing a bold new initiative with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to develop gene-based therapies to cure sickle cell disease (SCD) and HIV. The 10-year plan beginning with a \$200 million investment from the Gates Foundation aims to find affordable and accessible treatments to be used by vulnerable and highly impacted populations in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **NIH: Cancer Rates Continue to Decline**

The NIH issued the [Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer](#) on March 11. The report showed that cancer rates continued to decline from 2001 to 2017 across all ages, genders, and racial and ethnic groups. National Cancer Institute Director Norm Sharpless, MD, gave credit in the reduction of cancer rates to the investment in basic research.

### **NIGMS *Feedback Loop*: Application and Funding Trends in FY 2019**

The NIH's National Institute for General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) has for six straight years managed to increase its "cumulative investigator rate," the ratio of individual investigators funded to those seeking funding. The rate for FY 2019 was 41.2%. The number of funded early stage investigators has increased from 89 in 2013 to 229 in 2019. These funding trends were presented by Lisa Hechtman, PhD, program analyst, and Director Jon Lorsch, PhD, in an NIGMS *Feedback Loop* [blog post](#).

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

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### **UPDATE NIH Regional Seminar in Baltimore, MD Canceled**

The NIH has canceled the Spring 2020 NIH Regional Seminar on Program Funding and Grants Administration in Baltimore, MD, scheduled for April 20-22. [Visit the meeting website](#) to learn more about future Regional Seminar opportunities.

## **Requests for Public Comment**

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### **Request for Public Comment on Characteristics of Data Repositories – March 17**

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has issued a request for information (RFI) on characteristics of data repositories, on behalf of the multi-agency Subcommittee on Open Science of the National Science and Technology Council's Committee on Science. The proposed set of desirable characteristics for data repositories is part of the Subcommittee's efforts to improve the consistency of information that Federal agencies provide to the scientific community about the long-term preservation of

data resulting from Federally funded research. Please visit the [Federal Register post](#) for more information and to submit comments by the new March 17 deadline.

### **NINDS Seeks Feedback on Strategic Planning Process**

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) is embarking on an institute-wide strategic planning process, and published a [July 2019 request for information](#) on the process. The goal of the process is to tune its practices and policies to its vision and mission, in order to better serve and anticipate the needs of the research and patient communities and the public. The mission of NINDS is to seek fundamental knowledge about the brain and nervous system and to use that knowledge to reduce the burden of neurological disease. Those interested in submitting comments for consideration as NINDS establishes a new strategic plan may still do so [through this form](#).

### **NIH Seeks Feedback on NIH-Wide Strategic Plan – March 25**

NIH has issued a [Request for Information](#) seeking public input on a framework for the 2021-2025 NIH-Wide Strategic Plan. The new plan will build on the previous [NIH-wide Strategic Plan](#) to guide NIH's research efforts over the next five years. NIH is encouraging stakeholder organizations (e.g., patient advocacy groups, professional societies, etc.) to submit a single response reflective of the views of the organization/membership as a whole. NIH will be hosting two webinars in March to describe the planning process and answer questions. Information about these webinars will be posted on the [NIH-Wide Strategic Plan webpage](#) as soon as information is available. Please provide your feedback via the [RFI submission site](#). The RFI will remain open through March 25.

### **NIH RFI: Priorities for Behavioral and Social Science Research – March 29**

The NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) is [requesting information](#) on its scientific priorities, particularly for three research directions that are trans-disease and cross-cutting in nature and address critical gaps in the field: synergy in basic and applied BSSR; BSSR resources, methods, and measures; and adoption of effective BSSR in practice. Comments must be submitted online by March 29.

### **OSTP Requests Information on Public Access to Publications, Data – April 6**

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is [requesting information](#) on public access to peer-reviewed scholarly publications, data, and code resulting from federally funded research. This request is part of the OSTP and the National Science and Technology Council's efforts to facilitate implementation and compliance with the 2013 [memorandum](#) on Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research and to address recommended actions made by the Government Accountability Office in a 2019 report. Comments must be submitted by the new date of April 6.

## **Job Postings**

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### **ASM Seeks Senior Grassroots Manager**

The American Society for Microbiology is seeking a Senior Grassroots Manager. This newly created position is responsible for developing and implementing an organizational grassroots strategy to engage ASM members on public policy issues that affect the microbial sciences. [Learn more and apply here.](#)

### **AAI Seeks Science Policy Analyst**

The American Association of Immunologists (AAI), a non-profit professional biomedical research association, seeks a motivated and intellectually inquisitive individual to provide scientific expertise to the AAI public affairs program. This position supports the Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs, the members of the AAI Committee on Public Affairs, and other AAI staff in developing scientific and policy positions that convey the views, concerns, and interests of the AAI membership. Qualified candidates should submit a cover letter with resume, including publications, and salary requirements, to FASEB Human Resources at [resumes@faseb.org](mailto:resumes@faseb.org), or visit the [FASEB employment website](#) to apply. [See attached](#) and the [FASEB job site](#) to view a detailed job description.

### **March of Dimes Seeks Associate Director, Maternal Health Coalition**

March of Dimes is seeking an [Associate Director, Maternal Health Coalition](#) to manage March of Dimes' efforts in serving as the "backbone organization" for the Coalition for Optimal and Equitable Maternal Health, a multi-stakeholder coalition to advance maternal health. The Project Director will lead efforts to ensure the Coalition's governance through strong coalition management and support of its policy development and advocacy, data and research, and communications and outreach efforts.

### **ASBMB Seeks Federal Affairs Manager**

The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) seeks a Manager, Federal Affairs to join the Public Affairs team. The federal manager will assist in the development and execution of ASBMB public affairs programs with respect to federal science funding agencies; help manage Public Affairs Advisory Committee operations, and work closely with ASBMB public affairs leadership in developing, articulating, communicating and implementing public policy positions on behalf of ASBMB. Visit the [posting of the full job description](#) to learn more and review application instructions.

**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).*