



THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

March 23, 2020

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:

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences @RutgersBHS March 21

Researchers from [@Rutgers NJMS](#) have conducted the first evaluation of an innovative point-of-care test to detect COVID-19 within 45 minutes. Given the test's speed and accuracy, it will be a game-changer for crucial medical decisions. go.rutgers.edu/ohmskly9

House Outside Witness Testimony Due Today

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](#).

Senate COVID-19 Proposal Includes Additional Supplementary Funding for NIH

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) introduced a third coronavirus supplemental funding bill on March 22, totaling close to \$2 trillion for several provisions including to support small businesses, provide tax rebates to individuals and families, and provide supplemental appropriations ([CQ, subscription required](#)). Included in this proposal is an additional \$945 million for NIH, targeted to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB), National Library of Medicine (NLM), and National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). The Senate failed to pass a [procedural vote](#) on the legislation on March 22 and will continue work on this package the week of March 23 while awaiting a separate proposal from the House of Representatives.

NIH Begins Clinical Trial for Coronavirus Vaccine

On March 16, NIH [issued a news release](#) detailing the start of a Phase 1 clinical trial on a COVID-19 vaccine taking place in Seattle, Washington. The vaccine was developed by NIAID scientists in collaboration with Moderna, Inc. and will be tested on 45 health adults between ages 18 and 45. NIAID Director Anthony Fauci, MD, noted "Finding a safe and

effective vaccine to prevent infection with SARS-CoV-2 is an urgent public health priority. This Phase 1 study, launched in record speed, is an important first step toward achieving that goal.”

NIH Director Discusses Importance of Social Distancing

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, authored a [March 19 blog post](#) with a COVID-19 update by defining social distancing and summarizing findings from a recent NIH-funded research study documenting the importance of social distancing in slowing the spread of COVID-19. The research indicated that for every confirmed COVID-19 case, there are likely another five to 10 undetected infections, and those undetected infections are often the infection source for confirmed cases. Dr. Collins reminded readers that we are all in this together and “social distancing remains one of the best weapons we have to slow the silent spread of this virus ...This will give our health-care professionals, hospitals, and other institutions more valuable time to prepare, protect themselves, and aid the many people whose lives may be on the line from this coronavirus.”

NIH Posts Notices on Animal Care, Clinical Trials, Funding Influenced by Coronavirus

The week of March 16, NIH posted several notices on issues surrounding COVID-19. [One notice](#) informs institutions of “flexibilities provided in the Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals that are applicable to implementing a pandemic plan for animal care and use programs,” which also contains provisions on social distancing.

A [second guidance](#) addresses NIH-funded clinical trials and human subjects studies affected by COVID-19, emphasizing ways to further protect study participants and describing options for dealing with unanticipated trial costs.

Separately, the [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#) (NHLBI), [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) (NIDA), and [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases together with National Institute of General Medical Sciences](#) (NIAID and NIGMS) have announced the availability of administrative supplements and revision supplements to support research on the virus SARS-CoV-2 and the disease COVID-19. As a reminder, NIH is maintaining a [webpage](#) listing all coronavirus-related notices.

NIH Labs Shift to Non-Mission-Critical Maintenance Operations

The NIH on March 20 [issued a news release](#) indicating that non-mission-critical intramural research laboratories would be shifting to maintenance phase operations beginning March 23. To protect the health and safety of NIH staff, “NIH will strictly limit the presence of staff in laboratories supporting non-critical functions to focus on maintenance. All research functions suitable for remote work, such as data analysis, literature reviews, or drafting and review of manuscripts, is expected to be performed remotely.”

Sign-On Opportunity Letter to Appropriators re. Review of COVID-19 Response

The American Society for Microbiology, Association of American Universities, Association of Public Health Laboratories, and Trust for America’s Health invite organizations to join in [sending a letter](#) to House and Senate appropriators calling for a nonpartisan review of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, once the immediate public health emergency subsides. By fully understanding what went well and what did not during this most recent

pandemic, we can help thwart, or at the very least minimize, the effects of the next pandemic. The letter also calls for forward-looking recommendations on policy and funding.

There is active interest on the Hill for authorizing and funding such a study in a supplemental or the FY 21 appropriations bills, so that when the crisis passes NASEM or a commission can proceed quickly. Please [fill out this form](#) to sign on. Deadline to sign on is **noon on Thursday, March 26**.

Requests for Public Comment

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.

NIH Seeks Feedback on NIH-Wide Strategic Plan – April 1

NIH has extended 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 April 1.

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.

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](#).

Job Postings

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, 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 or Tannaz Rasouli at trasouli@aamc.org.*