

## Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – April 17, 2017

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 welcome suggestions from the community for future issues of the Weekly Round-Up. Here's this week's featured tweet:

### **Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) - @APLU\_News**

*Why fund @NIH? Supporting university research leads to groundbreaking medical innovation & stimulates the economy.*

#### **1. Reps. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) and Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) Op-Ed on NIH**

On April 12 in Morning Consult, Reps. Fred Upton (R-Mich) and Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) [wrote](#) a joint op-ed in support of NIH funding. They opened by stating, “The National Institutes of Health is in the business of curing diseases. For more than a century, NIH scientists have improved American lives by making important discoveries that benefit public health.” After citing their concerns with the president’s budget proposal to cut NIH funding, they said, “These cuts might make sense on a spreadsheet, but they don’t accurately reflect the critical and often unprecedented work this agency actually does.”

#### **2. Nobel Prize Winning Scientist Questions Potential NIH Budget Reductions**

On April 3, Elizabeth Blackburn, PhD, president of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, [wrote](#) an article in TIME detailing her views of proposed increases to defense spending at the expense of research agencies like the NIH. Dr. Blackburn, who won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2009, asks the question, “When did we start to value killing over living?” After discussing medical breakthroughs, technological advances, and vast amounts of data supported by the NIH, she goes on to make the point that, “Real threats do exist in today’s world. And scientific research presents both a good offense and a good defense.”

#### **3. VP for Research at University of Kentucky Writes about NIH Funding**

Lisa Cassis, PhD, vice president for research at University of Kentucky (UK), [wrote](#) an opinion piece on Thursday, April 13 about how proposed reductions in NIH investments would impact UK, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and the nation as a whole. Dr. Cassis calls the NIH “an engine for both medical and economic progress” saying that if NIH cuts proposed by the administration were implemented, they estimate “a reduction in 219 jobs at UK alone, with an effective loss of 339 jobs across the Commonwealth.”

#### **4. Research Institute President Says NIH Reductions Would Have Long-Term Impact**

On April 9, John Barnard, MD, president of the Research Institute at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, [wrote](#) about how short term NIH budget reductions would have a long term impact on the investment of research. Dr. Barnard says that the NIH budget “primes our research and development efforts with early-stage funding to universities, medical schools, hospitals and research institutes.” He says this support provide discoveries that “are passed on to

biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries for further development at a cost far exceeding the government's initial investment.”

### **5. Seattle Researchers Discuss Importance of NIH Funding**

A Fox-affiliated newscast in the Seattle region [aired](#) a segment on the work of researchers at University of Washington (UW) Medicine, largely funded by NIH, and its effect on the cancer community. Vaccines overseen by a team of researchers at UW Medicine, including Lupe Salazar, MD, have provided hope to cancer patients undergoing treatment. Dr. Salazar pointed out that reductions in NIH funding aren't “just cutting the research, it's also eliminating jobs.”

### **6. HHS Leaves Hiring Restrictions in Place**

Press reports state that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has continued to enforce a hiring freeze [instituted](#) on January 23 by the administration, which ordered hiring suspensions across all executive departments and agencies. On April 12, the freeze was replaced by a [memo](#) issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to further reform the Federal workforce. Information obtained by reporters state that the Department chose to “leave all hiring restrictions in place ... until additional strategies have been developed.”

### **7. Reminder of Upcoming Senate Labor-HHS Subcommittee Deadline**

The Subcommittee deadline to submit outside witness testimony related to FY 2018 appropriations is close of business on June 2. All testimony must be in accordance with the [guidelines](#) set out by the subcommittee.

### **8. Applications Open for the 2017 NIMHD Health Disparities Research Institute**

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) will host the Health Disparities Research Institute (HDRI) from August 14 - 18. The HDRI aims to support the research career development of promising minority health/health disparities research scientists early in their careers and stimulate research in the disciplines supported by health disparities science. The due date for submitting an application is May 12 at 11:59 pm EST. Visit the NIMHD [website](#) for more information.

### **9. NIH Holds Council of Councils Meeting in May**

The NIH [published](#) a Federal Register Notice regarding a May 26 Council of Councils meeting. The meeting will begin at 8:15 am at the NIH in Building 21, C Wing, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Conference Room 10. Among other topics queued up for the meeting, agenda items for the open sessions include a discussion of the history of the Knockout Mouse Program (KOMP), background on NIH and federal budget process, progress and plans at the National Institute on Aging (NIA), and the Common Fund Diversity Program. The open session will be videocast and can be accessed from the NIH Videocasting and Podcasting Web site <http://videocast.nih.gov>.

*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 Joe Bañez at [jbanez@aamc.org](mailto:jbanez@aamc.org) or Tannaz Rasouli at [trasouli@aamc.org](mailto:trasouli@aamc.org).*