Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
April 19, 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:

The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) @SfNtweets – April 16

SfN had a successful #HillDay in March. Thank you to everyone who made their voices heard through social media and in congressional meetings. Check out the NQ piece highlighting details of our 15th annual event. https://bit.ly/3smRPPs #NeuroAdvocate

HHS Secretary Testifies on President’s FY22 Budget
Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra testified on April 15 before the House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee regarding President Biden’s FY 2022 budget request, which includes a proposed $51 billion for the NIH. Full committee and subcommittee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) addressed the proposed Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) within the NIH budget, noting an interest in learning more about the proposal and the need to continue investments in existing research at the NIH. Rep. Andy Harris (D-Md.) cited concern about the ARPA-H proposal, that it would move the NIH farther from basic research, or duplicate institutes already housed within the NIH. Becerra testified, “We’re trying to move beyond just the basic research to be able to have transformational result What we think we can do is help make things click a lot faster by putting some additional money into that research and development that lets us get something from an idea to actually a practice.”

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, is expected to testify on the FY 2022 budget proposal in May.

NIH Removes Trump-Era Restrictions on Use of Fetal Tissue in Research
The NIH issued a guide notice on April 16 reversing 2019 regulations that restricted the use of human fetal tissue in research. Specifically, the notice “informs the extramural research community that HHS is reversing its 2019 decision that all research applications for NIH grants and contracts proposing the use of human fetal tissue from elective abortions will be reviewed by an Ethics Advisory Board.” The notice adds that NIH will not convene another Ethics Advisory Board for fetal tissue research review, and that additional elements of the 2019 notices regarding proposed human fetal tissue research remain in place.

NIH Extramural Director to Testify Before Senate HELP Committee
NIH’s Deputy Director of Extramural Research Michael Lauer, MD, will testify before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee on April 22 at 10am in a hearing titled, “Protecting U.S. Biomedical Research: Efforts to Prevent Undue Foreign Influence.” Lauer will be joined by witnesses from the HHS Office of National Security, HHS Office of Inspector General, and the Government Accountability Office.

NIH-funded COVID-19 Testing Initiative Aims to Safely Return Children to In-person School

An April 15 NIH news release details a new return to in-person school research effort to “to build evidence on safely returning students, teachers and support staff to in-person school in areas with vulnerable and underserved populations.” The Safe Return to School Diagnostic Testing Initiative will fund research at 10 institutions in eight states as part of NIH’s Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics Underserved Populations (RADx-UP) program and will be overseen by NIH’s Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). “These awards will foster the development of comprehensive programs to meet the challenge of safely returning children to in-person schooling, particularly for children who are vulnerable to COVID-19 or who are at risk for significant disparities in access to testing,” said Diana W. Bianchi, MD, director of NICHD. The two-year, $33 million initiative utilizes funds provided in the American Rescue Plan.

NCATS Director’s Farewell Message After 10 Years of Service

Chris Austin, PhD, authored his final message as National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) director on April 15, reflecting on his 10-year tenure and advances in translational sciences. Austin highlighted several accomplishments including the establishment of the translational science field of study; the development of breakthrough technologies such as tissue chips and new technology platforms; and led the evolution of unique national clinical translational research platforms. “A key ingredient to all these remarkable successes has been a culture of informed, persistent and patient focused questioning of how translation could be done better. Teamwork also has been an ironclad rule — the more diverse our translational science teams are, the more productive our projects have been,” Austin said. NCATS Deputy Director Joni Rutter, PhD, will serve as acting director during the search process for NCATS’ next director.

NIH Funds New Influenza Research Network

NIH’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) announced a new Centers of Excellence for Influenza Research and Response (CEIRR) program in an April 14 news release. The seven year program will fund five institutions to conduct research into influenza, related vaccine responses, and disease transmission. “Although CEIRR is primarily focused on influenza, the network also will study SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and other emerging viruses of pandemic potential,” the statement said.

Upcoming Events

**TODAY** NIH Alzheimer’s Research Summit – April 19-22

Join leading scientists and innovators, public health advocates, and other stakeholders for the 2021 NIH Alzheimer's Research Summit on April 19-22. The summit will showcase progress in Alzheimer’s disease research and will provide a forum to identify gaps and opportunities towards the goal of precision medicine for Alzheimer’s disease treatment and prevention. Please visit the summit website for more information and to register.
Virtual Briefing on Demographic Insights into COVID-19 – April 23

The Population Association of America invites you to a virtual congressional briefing, “Living, Working, Dying: Demographic Insights into COVID-19,” on Friday, April 23, 12:00 to 1:00 pm EST. The event will feature presentations by prominent population scientists who will present findings on the disparate impacts of COVID, especially as they relate to mortality, education, food insecurity, and family dynamics, and what additional research and data are needed to understand and address its far-reaching effects. To register, please go to: Webinar Registration - Zoom.

HHS Virtual Small Business Program Conference – April 26-30

The NIH is sponsoring the 2021 HHS Small Business Program Conference titled, “Diverse Perspectives SEEDing Impactful Innovations,” from April 26-30. The free virtual conference will discuss how to apply for seed funding to support early-stage biomedical research and grow small businesses. Please visit the conference website for additional information and to register. NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Michael Lauer, MD, discusses the upcoming event in his March 31 blog post.

Virtual Social Science Advocacy Day – April 27

Join COSSA (Consortium of Social Science Associations) on April 27, 2021 to be part of the only annual, coordinated advocacy day in support of all of the social and behavioral sciences. Social Science Advocacy Day brings together social scientists and other science advocates from across the country to engage with policymakers. Last year, Advocacy Day went virtual and we will build on that for 2021 to give participants the ability to safely engage with their elected officials from home. Register here for the April 27 advocacy day.

NASEM to Host Workshop on Strategies for Effective Data Management and Sharing – April 28-29

On April 28-29, 2021, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) is hosting Changing the Culture of Data Management and Sharing, a virtual public workshop to examine strategies for effective data management and sharing. The workshop will discuss challenges to and potential solutions for data management and sharing across scientific disciplines and ways researchers can integrate data management and sharing practices into their routine research conduct. The workshop aims to inform implementation strategies for the new NIH Policy for Data Management and Sharing. Additional information, including the workshop agenda and registration portal, is available on the workshop website.

Apply for the Childhood Eczema Challenge Grant – Deadline May 4

Applications for the 2021 National Eczema Association/Pediatric Dermatology Research Alliance Childhood Eczema Grant in the amount of $50,000 are due May 4. Additional details and a link to apply are on the NEA website.

Symposium on Integrating Sex and Gender into Biomedical Research as a Path for Better Science and Innovation – May 11-12
The NIH Office of Research on Women’s Health (ORWH) is convening the fifth annual Vivian Pinn Symposium (VPS) to communicate broadly about sex and gender influences on health and diseases, to disseminate research on the health of women, and to highlight pressing issues in women’s health. The topic for the 2021 Symposium is “Integrating Sex and Gender into Biomedical Research as a Path for Better Science and Innovation.” Registration information will be here when available for this public, virtual symposium.

**Support the 2021 Golden Goose Award – May 31**

Last year the Golden Goose Award highlighted scientists working to understand and respond to the pandemic; the virtual ceremony was the most-watched ever, and the stories of those highlighted have continued to receive national attention. The Golden Goose Award plans to recognize 2021 awardees during a virtual ceremony in September. We are reaching out to Ad Hoc Group member organizations to ask for your support of the 2021 Golden Goose Award. There has perhaps never been a more important time to recognize those who have dedicated themselves to scientific research that has become critical to our health and wellbeing. Information on sponsoring the Golden Goose Award can be found on our website. The deadline for pledging support for this year’s award is May 31, 2021.

**Requests for Public Comment**

**NIH Seeks Comments on Efforts to Strengthen Equity in Biomedical Research – April 23**

As a part of the UNITE initiative, the NIH issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking public input on approaches to improve and strengthen racial equity, diversity, and inclusion across all facets of the biomedical research workforce, both within NIH and the external community. The RFI also seeks feedback on ways to expand research to eliminate or lessen health disparities and inequities. The NIH invites stakeholders throughout the scientific research, advocacy, clinical practice, and non-scientific communities, including the general public, to provide feedback by the new deadline of April 23.

**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.