Ad Hoc Group Weekly COVID-19 Follow Up
April 22, 2021

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be publishing an additional weekly
update focused on COVID-19 to highlight related NIH actions and guidance as well as
activities from the Ad Hoc Group community and general updates. As always, please
forward any relevant items to Christa Wagner (chwagner@aamc.org) for inclusion in
the publication!

Congressional and NIH News

Senate Republicans Maintain Caucus Ban on Earmarks
Senate Republicans opted to uphold a ban on earmarks established in the 115th
Congress during a closed-door meeting on April 21, reported CQ (subscription
required). Several Republicans told reporters that the ban is not binding, and that
individual members can still request earmarks for projects in their home states.
"[Earmarks are] allowed under the rules. They've never been disallowed. That's not a
rule. That's a statement of the caucus. It doesn't bind anybody," said Sen. Richard
Shelby (R-Ala.), chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Both parties in the
House have agreed to the use of earmarks, or Community Project Funding, for FY
2022.

Senate LHHS Subcommittee Sets FY 2022 Outside Witness
Testimony Deadline
The Senate Labor-HHS Subcommittee has posted a deadline of June 24 for outside
witness testimony for FY 2022. Additional details on the format and submission
instructions are on the subcommittee website.

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,

Large Clinical Trial to Study Repurposed Drugs to Treat COVID-19
Symptoms
An April 18 NIH news release summarized a Phase 3 clinical trial to investigate several existing FDA-approved medications as treatment options for COVID-19 patients. The NIH-funded trial, part of the ACTIV partnership, will study over-the-counter medications in adults with mild to moderate COVID-19. “While we’re doing a good job with treating hospitalized patients with severe disease, we don’t currently have an approved medication that can be self-administered to ease symptoms of people suffering from mild disease at home, and reduce the chance of their needing hospitalization,” said NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD. “ACTIV-6 will evaluate whether certain drugs showing promise in small trials can pass the rigor of a larger trial.”

Experimental Antiviral For COVID-19 Effective in Hamster Study
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eLife: Funding Disparities and Topic Choice in NIH Peer Review
An April 13 research article in eLife by Michael Lauer, MD, NIH deputy director for extramural research and NIH colleagues, examined the funding disparities for African-American or Black (AAB) principal investigators occurring in NIH peer review. Previous studies had shown a bias in NIH peer review panels against research topics often submitted by AAB scientists. Lauer and colleagues found that the lower rate of funding for applications focused on AAB-preferred topics “was primarily due to their assignment to [Institute and Centers] with lower award rates, not to peer-reviewer preferences.”

Upcoming Events

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.

**NEW** Senate LHHS FY 2022 Outside Witness Testimony Deadline - June 24
The Senate Labor-HHS Subcommittee has posted a deadline of June 24 for outside witness testimony for FY 2022. Additional details on the format and submission instructions are on the [subcommittee website](#).

**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.
- [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.