Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
May 17, 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:

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities @APLU_News – May 17

@usd researchers are studying wastewater epidemiology to better understand the #Covid19 pandemic in the Vermillion area. This research will allow them to determine whether a variant of the virus has entered the area.

President’s Budget Request Expected May 27
President Biden’s full budget request for FY 2022 is expected on May 27, reported Politico on May 13 (subscription required). The detailed request is expected to cover both mandatory and discretionary funding requests, and additional details on individual NIH institutes and centers and related proposals through the Office of the Director.

Becerra Testifies on FY 2022 Budget Before House Energy & Commerce
Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, JD, testified before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health on Wednesday, May 12, on the FY 2022 HHS budget request. Subcommittee Chair Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) asked Becerra about the rationale for including the proposed ARPA-H research initiative within the NIH, noting that the existing programs that ARPA-H would be modeled after are more independent. Becerra responded, “I think we have any number of places we could feel comfortable with it. But NIH continues to do the basic research. If we want to just lift that up and launch faster, we can discuss that. But the important thing is that we launch and not let issues about, bureaucratically, where we’re going to locate ARPA-H get in the way of a great idea.”

Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) noted that he intends to include ARPA-H in an update to the 2016 law 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. 114-255), or “Cures 2.0,” which he again is leading with Rep. Diana DeGette (D-Colo.). “We’re all very excited about ARPA-H, and obviously we want to make sure that it doesn’t interfere with the other functions that the NIH and others have. We have made the pledge as we look to the future, as we look to
an update on 21st Century Cures, to in fact include ARPA-H to help that legislation get through," Upton said during the hearing.

**Fauci Testifies at Senate HELP Committee on COVID-19 Response**

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Director Anthony Fauci, MD, discussed Congress’s $1.15 billion investment in the NIH to better understand long-term COVID-19 symptoms during a [May 11 hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee]. Fauci highlighted an ongoing multi-institute effort led by his institute and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke, and the National Institute of Mental Health, as well as NIH’s recent request for applications to develop cohort studies.

**House Labor-HHS Subcommittee to Hold Member Day, Public Witness Hearings**

The House Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee will hold hearings on FY 2022 the week of May 17. The [Member Day] will take place on May 18 at 12:30pm EST, followed by the [Public Witness Day] on Wednesday, May 19 at 10am EST.

**Modified RISE Act Incorporated into Senate Endless Frontier Act Markup**

Components of the Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act ([H.R. 869 / S. 289]) were incorporated into the amendment in the nature of a substitute to the Endless Frontier Act (S. 1260) passed by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on May 10. The Endless Frontier Act aims to address the United States’ global research competitiveness and foreign government influence in research through investments in the National Science Foundation. Sec. 505 of the amended Endless Frontier Act would allow administrators of federal research agencies, including the NIH, to provide supplemental funding to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 to the U.S. research enterprise. The text would not authorize supplemental funds for the research agencies to support research impacted by the pandemic. The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research previously endorsed the RISE Act as introduced in the House and Senate, which would authorize $10 billion to the NIH to supplement research disrupted by the pandemic.

**NIH Director Discusses Joint NIH-CDC Testing Initiative on CBS Evening News**

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, joined the [May 11 CBS Evening News] to discuss the COVID-19 self-testing initiative co-sponsored by the NIH and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The research study aims to prevent COVID-19 by distributing 2 million at-home tests to 80,000 families in rural North Carolina and Tennessee and hypothesizes that increased at-home testing will catch new infections earlier and prevent community spread.

**NLM Deputy Director Appointed to White House Scientific Integrity Task Force**

National Library of Medicine (NLM) Deputy Director Jerry Sheehan, MD, [has been appointed a co-chair] of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Scientific Integrity Task Force. “By mobilizing this Task Force, OSTP is
inaugurating a whole-of-government process that will lift up the voices of Federal scientists of many perspectives and backgrounds, in order to ensure that scientific integrity is paramount in Federal governance for years to come,” the press release stated. The task force will convene for the first time on May 14.

**NIH News Release: Mental Handwriting Produces Brain Activity That Can Be Turned into Text**

Research funded through NIH’s Brain Research Through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative allows patients with spinal cord injury and neurological disorders who are unable to write to communicate through a novel brain-computer interface (BCI), reported an NIH news release on May 12. The BCI utilizes brain activity transferred through two electrodes implanted in the brain to produce written words on a screen at a rate of up to 90 characters per minute. “By using handwriting to record from hundreds of individual neurons, we can write any letter and thus any word which provides a truly ‘open vocabulary’ that can be used in most any life situation,” said Frank Willett, PhD, an HHMI Research Scientist at Stanford University and the study’s lead author.

**Friends of NIH ORWH Coalition Launching this Month**

The first-ever Friends of the NIH Office of Research on Women’s Health (FORWH) coalition invites new members to join in celebration of National Women’s Health Month. The NIH Office of Research on Women’s Health (ORWH) was established in response to advocacy concerns regarding a lack of consistent inclusion of women in NIH-supported clinical research. The FORWH coalition will be composed of groups committed to advancing women’s health, with primary goals of advocating for federal support of ORWH’s mission, ensuring stable resources for the ORWH, and to improving awareness of ORWH’s ongoing work. For more information, please check out the FORWH website. If you’d like to join, please have a representative from your organization fill out this form, or contact policy@swhr.org for questions.

**Upcoming Events**

**House LHHS FY 2022 Outside Witness Testimony Deadline – May 19**

The House Labor-HHS Subcommittee has posted a deadline of May 19 for outside witness testimony for FY 2022. Additional details on the format and submission instructions are on the subcommittee website.

**Virtual Briefing on the Economic and Health Impacts of Human Genetics and Genomics – May 19**

A forthcoming report from the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) and TEConomy Partners LLC, ‘Economic Impact and Functional Applications of Human Genetics and Genomics,’ will examine how genetics research supports the U.S. economy, public health, and innovation. Nearly two decades after the end of the federally funded Human Genome Project, there has been widespread expansion of human genetics and genomics technology in research and clinical care, with the U.S. achieving early leadership in the industry. Human genetics and genomics have become foundational for understanding health and disease, including enabling our rapid response to COVID-19 and vaccine development. Join leading experts including
National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) Director Eric Green, MD, PhD, on Wednesday, May 19 at 1pm EST for a conversation on the economic impact derived from human genetics and genomics and advances in research and clinical care. Registration is available here.

**NEW NIH Council of Councils – May 20-21**
The NIH Council of Councils is scheduled to meet virtually on May 10-11, with the meeting open to the public on both days beginning at 11:00am EST. The meeting will be accessible at http://videocast.nih.gov. Please see the Federal Register notice and Council of Councils meeting website for additional information.

**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.

**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.

**Apply for National Eczema Association Research Grants – Deadline August 31**
Applications are being accepted for the 2021 National Eczema Association (NEA) research grant cycle. Grants for junior and senior investigators ranging from $5,000-$150,000 are available. Applications are due August 31. Additional details are on the NEA 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.

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

**NEW** IADR/AADR Seek Assistant Director of Government Affairs
The International and American Associations for Dental Research are seeking an Assistant Director of Government Affairs to recommend and implement the Associations' policy priorities related to dental, oral and craniofacial research; the federal research enterprise, including the scientific workforce; scholarly publishing; international collaboration and more. [Additional information and application instructions can be found here.](#)

American Urological Association Seeks Payment Policy Manager
The American Urological Association (AUA), the premier urologic association providing support to the urologic community, is currently searching for a Payment Policy Manager located primarily in our Linthicum, Maryland office. This position partners with the Director of Policy & Advocacy on the alignment of the AUA, AUAER, and Urology Care Foundation’s policy strategies and advocacy messaging in conjunction with medical societies, federal agencies, and coalitions. Liaises with a core team of advocacy partners and a consultant to promote the AUA’s policy priorities around physician payment. [More information can be found here.](#)

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.](#)

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.