

## Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – May 21, 2018

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:

### Senate L-HHS Subcommittee Chair Roy Blunt (R-Mo.)

*“[@NIH](#) research has paved the way for numerous medical advances. Maintaining a strong federal commitment to medical research will continue that progress, save lives, and lower costs. More from today's [@NIH](#) budget hearing: [bit.ly/2IuZogX](http://bit.ly/2IuZogX)”*

### 1. Senate Appropriations Labor-H Subcommittee Hearing on NIH – May 17

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, and five institute directors May 17 testified before the Senate Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee. Dr. Collins' opening statement is available on the [NIH website](#). Committee members highlighted three years of strong budget growth for NIH, and also questioned Dr. Collins on a recently halted [NIH study](#) to investigate the effects of moderate alcohol consumption on health. Other committee members covered a host of topics in their questioning, including: alternatives to opioids for chronic pain and for addiction treatment; infectious disease, including Ebola and a universal flu vaccine; Alzheimer's Disease; and big data.

### 2. Senate 302(b) Allocations Considerations – May 24

The Senate Appropriations Committee will hold a [business meeting](#) to consider the 302(b) subcommittee allocations for the fiscal year (FY) 2019 spending bills. Last week, Labor-HHS Subcommittee Chairman Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) was quoted in [CQ](#) (by subscription only) that the FY 2019 302(b) for the full L-HHS bill is “right at \$2 billion [higher] compared to what it was last time.”

### 3. NIH Council of Councils Meeting – May 18

The NIH Council of Councils Meeting took place May 18 in Bethesda. Agenda items included: evaluating the “Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training (BEST)” Awards; National Institute on Drug Abuse update; an introduction to the use of Non-Human Primates (NHP) in addiction research; and NHP models of drug addiction. A recording of the meeting and PDF of presentation slides can be found [here](#).

### 4. NRSA Stipends Increase by Two Percent

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) May 9 issued its fiscal year (FY) 2018 [stipend levels](#) for trainees receiving Ruth L Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSAs). NIH will increase NRSA stipends by approximately two percent on average across

stipend levels for undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. In an *Open Mike* [blog post](#), NIH Deputy Director of Extramural Research Mike Lauer, MD, explained these changes and also noted that NIH is currently reviewing the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine latest recommendations on postdoctoral stipend increases for post-docs in its [Next Generation Researchers report](#), released April 12, 2018.

## **5. Science: Improving Support for Young Biomedical Scientists**

The complex problem of supporting the next generation of biomedical researchers, already being tackled by [the NIH](#) and the [National Academies of Sciences, Medicine, and Engineering](#), is also addressed in a *Science* [article](#) by Rescuing Biomedical Research [members](#) Bruce Alberts, PhD, Tony Hyman, PhD, Christopher L. Pickett, PhD, Shirley Tilghman, PhD, and Harold Varmus, MD. The authors note that this and a related problem, the systematic discouragement of young researchers from pursuing risky basic research, can "prevent talented trainees from aspiring to careers in biomedical research, despite the extraordinary opportunities offered by new technologies and recent discoveries." They make three recommendations to funding agencies, particularly the NIH: 1) Greatly expand use of the DP2 mechanism, 2) Increase the funding of young investigators through requests for applications (RFAs), and 3) Experiment with separate competitions for Early Stage Investigators (ESIs) when awarding traditional investigator initiated R01 grants.

## **6. House Amendment Proposes Change in On-site USDA Inspections**

Rep. David Rouzer (R-N.C.) submitted an [amendment](#) to [H.R. 2](#) (Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018) seeking to provide the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) more flexibility in the timing of on-site inspections of universities under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Specifically, the amendment would modify the provision for on-site inspections under AWA to occur at least once every three years, rather than annually, for those university research programs subject to the regulation. The House Rules Committee did not include the amendment among those to be considered on the House floor. The larger bill failed on a 198-213 vote.

## **7. Senate NIH Caucus Briefing on a Universal Flu Vaccine – May 23**

On May 23, from noon to 1pm in 385 Russell Senate Office building, the Senate NIH Caucus will host a briefing titled, "A Universal Flu Vaccine: Making a Better Vaccine to Protect Against Seasonal and Pandemic Flu." Anthony Fauci, MD, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, will address the factors that made this past flu season so severe, the ever-present threat of an influenza pandemic, and the research underway to develop "universal" vaccines to provide durable protection against multiple influenza strains. This briefing also will address how Congress can most effectively support this work. Sens. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), NIH Caucus co-chairs, will give opening remarks. To RSVP, email [RSVP@ACTforNIHFoundation.org](mailto:RSVP@ACTforNIHFoundation.org). For more information, please contact Nick Myers in Sen. Graham's office ([Nick\\_Myers@lgraham.senate.gov](mailto:Nick_Myers@lgraham.senate.gov)) or Jessica McNiece in Sen. Durbin's office ([Jessica\\_McNiece@durbin.senate.gov](mailto:Jessica_McNiece@durbin.senate.gov)).

## **8. FOVA Briefing on VA Opioids and Chronic Pain Research**

The Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA) will host a Hill briefing on research at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA researchers Sulayman Dib-Hajj, PhD, Erin Krebs, MD, MPH, and Matthew Bair, MD will present their work on understanding opioids and chronic pain management, and will be joined by Rachel Ramoni, DMD, ScD, VA's Chief Research and Development Officer. To RSVP, please email [htran@navref.org](mailto:htran@navref.org) and see attached flyer for more information.

## **9. Deadline Senate Labor-HHS FY 2019 Outside Witness Testimony**

The Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee [posted](#) instructions for submitting outside witness testimony ahead of its work on FY 2019 appropriations. According to the instructions, testimony should be no longer than four pages and sent to the subcommittee no later than close of business on June 1.

## **10. NIH Advisory Committee to the Director Meeting – June 14-15**

Through a Federal Register [notice](#), the NIH announced a meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Director, National Institutes of Health, scheduled for June 14 and 15. Agenda items include NIH Director's Report, IC Director Report, and ACD Working Group Reports. The meeting will take place at National Institutes of Health, Building 31, 6th Floor Conference Room 6C, 31 Center Drive, Bethesda, MD 20892.

## **11. Celebrate Life Science Fair and Reception on Capitol Hill – July 18**

The Coalition for the Life Sciences (CLS) and FASEB will host the first Celebrate Life Science Fair and reception on Capitol Hill. The Life Science Fair will be held July 18, from 5pm – 7pm, in 2043 and 2044 Rayburn House Office Building. The Life Science Fair is an opportunity for the biomedical research community to engage Members of Congress and their staff about how scientific progress advances public health. Scientists will showcase their work, and attendees will have the opportunity to engage in hands-on experiments that bridge the gap between science and the society it serves. This event is open to the public; participation is not limited to CLS or FASEB members. Opportunities are limited due to room space. Please contact either Lynn Marquis ([lmарquis@coalitionforlifesciences.org](mailto:lmарquis@coalitionforlifesciences.org)) or Jennifer Zeitzer ([jzeitzer@faseb.org](mailto:jzeitzer@faseb.org)) for additional information. Please see the attached flyer for details and sponsorship opportunities.

## **12. Call for Golden Goose Award Nominations**

The Golden Goose Award team is accepting nominations for the 2018 year. The Golden Goose Awards honor federally funded research that may be odd, obscure, or serendipitous but ends up having a major impact on society. To submit a nomination, follow this link, or visit [goldengooseaward.org](http://goldengooseaward.org) and click on “nominate” in the top right corner. If submitting a nomination, be prepared to talk about who you are nominating, what unexpected impact the research has had, and which U.S. federal agency funded the work. Nominations are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year.

### **13. Job Opportunity: Policy and Advocacy Manager, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation**

CFF is seeking a Policy and Advocacy Manager, who will serve as the Foundation's lead lobbyist at the Federal level and play a key role in developing and advancing the Foundation's policy agenda to support the cystic fibrosis drug development pipeline and ensure people with CF have access to high-quality, specialized care. The Manager will track and analyze relevant legislation and regulations, help shape the Foundation's policy positions on these issues, and serve as the lead advocate for CFF's policy priorities on Capitol Hill, with federal agencies, and with other external partner organizations.

For a full description of the job and instructions on how to apply, please click [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](mailto:chwagner@aamc.org) or Tannaz Rasouli at [trasouli@aamc.org](mailto:trasouli@aamc.org).*