Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
June 1, 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:

**Temple Gov't Affairs @TUGovtAffairs – June 1**

@NIH-funded research by @TempleUniv @templemedschool scientists reveals novel analog drug derived from #Cannabis shows promising pain-halting effects in mice: https://www.templehealth.org/about/news/analog-drug-derived-from-cannabis-shows-promising-pain-halting-effects-in-mice-temple-scientists-report

**President’s Requests Historic Funding Level for NIH in FY 2022**

President Biden released the administration’s full FY 2022 budget request on May 28, including a proposed total discretionary program level of $51.9 billion for NIH, a $9 billion or 21% increase over the comparable FY 2021 level as described in the HHS Budget in Brief and the NIH FY 2022 Congressional Justification. Included in the total is a proposed $6.5 billion for a new Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), and funding for this new initiative would be available through September 30, 2024. The budget for NIH’s core base is a proposed $45.45 billion or a $2.52 billion (5.9%) increase in FY 2022.

In response to the proposal, the Ad Hoc Group issued a statement noting that the coalition is “thrilled to see President Biden propose a bold, historic funding level for the NIH overall in FY 2022, to amplify and build on the irreplaceable role of medical research in improving health and inspiring hope for patients and their families in the U.S. and around the globe.” The statement reiterates the recommendation of no less than $46.1 billion for the NIH’s base program level funding in FY 2022. Regarding the proposed ARPA-H initiative, the statement adds, “To advance the transformative mission of this and other targeted initiatives – and the NIH overall – it will be critical to ensure that funds supplement, rather than supplant, the core investment in NIH.”

**NIH Leadership Testifies on FY 2022 Budget Before House, Senate**

Leaders from the NIH testified before Appropriations Subcommittees on Labor-HHS in the House on May 25 and Senate on May 26 on the president’s FY 2022 budget proposal. Members from both subcommittees shared enthusiasm for the president’s proposal to increase the NIH base budget by $2.5 billion in FY 2022 and questioned
how the proposed $6.5 billion ARPA-H would fit in at the NIH and how it would function differently than the existing National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, also cited an estimated $16 billion loss regarding the pandemic's impact to the medical research enterprise. Members discussed a variety of issues including COVID-19 impacts to children and the biomedical research workforce, structural racism in research, gun violence prevention, the impact of climate change on health, the use of animals in research, marijuana research, and foreign government influence in research.

**Senate Approves Eric Lander, PhD, to Lead OSTP**
The Senate confirmed Eric Lander, PhD, to be director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) by voice vote on May 28. Lander’s confirmation as the first life scientist to serve as OSTP director and the first OSTP director to serve in a Cabinet-level position followed a Senate Commerce Committee vote on May 20.

**Marie Bernard, MD, Named NIH Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity**
Former Deputy Director of the National Institute on Aging (NIA) Marie Bernard, MD, has been named NIH’s chief officer of scientific workforce diversity (COSWD) by NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD. Bernard has been serving as acting COSWD since October 2020. “Dr. Bernard is an accomplished physician-scientist and has championed diversity and inclusion efforts over her entire career, including serving a leadership role in NIH’s most recent efforts to end structural racism in biomedical research through the UNITE initiative,” said Collins.

**Open Mike: Analysis of FY 2020 NIH Investigator Data**
NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Mike Lauer, MD, authored a May 17 Open Mike blog post investigating data on unique scientists funded by the NIH in FY 2020. The post focuses on the “cumulative investigator rate,” described as “a person-based metric that looks at the likelihood that unique investigators are funded over a five-year window.” The data show that the cumulative investigator rate increased for R01 and P01 grants types, but decreased slightly for R21 grants. Additional details can be found in the complete Data Book.

**Upcoming Events**

**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](#).
NEI Seeks Feedback on Draft Strategic Plan – June 7
The National Eye Institute has released a Request for Information seeking feedback from the public on the draft of its new strategic plan. Written responses can be submitted to NEIPlan@mail.nih.gov by June 7, 2021.

NCI: Seeking Stakeholder Input on Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion in the Cancer Research Workforce – July 15
The NIH National Cancer Institute (NCI) issued an RFI “on how to enhance diversity and inclusion in the cancer research workforce, including enhancing the participation of individuals who are underrepresented in cancer research, such as underrepresented minorities (URM).” This RFI is part of NCI’s Equity and Inclusion Program convened to identify opportunities and priorities that will promote equity and social justice in three areas: 1) Enhancing Cancer Health Disparities Research; 2) Diversifying the Cancer Research Workforce; and 3) Ensuring an Inclusive and Diverse Community at NCI. The response deadline is July 15, 2021.

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 American Thoracic Society Seeks Associate Director, Government Relations
The American Thoracic Society is accepting applications for following position: Associate Director, Government Relations. The Associate Director is responsible for developing and maintaining an ATS advocacy strategy for assigned issue areas. Reports to Chief, Advocacy & Government Relations. B.S. or B.A. degree in public health, health policy, health administration, biological sciences or related area with a minimum of five years congressional experience as an aide or legislative representative in a voluntary health organization or professional society. Excellent written and oral communication skills required. Additional details and application instructions are here.

NEW ASM Seeks Senior Specialist, Regulatory Affairs
The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) is seeking a Senior Specialist, Regulatory Affairs. The Senior Specialist will play an integral role on ASM’s federal affairs team by monitoring, analyzing and reporting on regulatory activity that has the potential to affect the microbial sciences community in assigned policy areas, with a particular focus on diagnostic regulation, food safety, coding and reimbursement. The specialist will also identify opportunities for ASM federal policy engagement with regulatory agencies such as the FDA and CMS, and help build relationships with agency officials. For more information go here.

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.

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.

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.