



## THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

### Ad Hoc Group Weekly COVID-19 Follow Up

June 18, 2020

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. As always, please forward any relevant items to Christa Wagner ([chwagner@aamc.org](mailto:chwagner@aamc.org)) for inclusion in the publication!

### Congressional and NIH News

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#### House Energy & Commerce Hearing on Government's COVID Response

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce will hold a hearing titled, "[Oversight of the Trump Administration's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)" on June 23 at 11:00 am. Witnesses include National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci, MD, Assistant Secretary for Health Adm Brett Giroir, MD, Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Stephen Hahn, MD, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert Redfield, MD. [The hearing will be webcast.](#)

#### Senate Appropriations Timeline Stalled

The Senate Appropriations Committee may delay plans to begin FY 2021 mark ups due to reported disagreements over process and Democrats' interest in introducing amendments to address the COVID-19 pandemic and police reform ([Roll Call](#)). Chairman Richard Shelby said in a statement that "funding the government is a serious responsibility, and I will not allow the appropriations process to be hijacked and turned into a partisan sideshow." Ranking Member Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) [countered](#), "Offering and considering amendments related to appropriations to address the most important issues of the day is not partisan, it is the job the Committee is here to do."

#### All of Us Joins COVID-19 Fight

The *All of Us* Research Program on June 16 announced its plans to participate in efforts to address and better understand COVID-19. [An NIH press release](#) highlights three areas of activity: antibody testing of *All of Us* participant blood samples, an online survey to "better understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on participants' physical and mental health," and collection of COVID-19-related information from participants' electronic health records. [NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, blogged about the new initiatives](#), noting, "As this data becomes available, researchers will look for new leads to inform our efforts to bring greater precision to the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of COVID-19, including for those communities that have been hit the hardest. Another hope is that what is learned about COVID-19 through All of Us and other NIH-supported research will provide us with the knowledge and tools we need to avert future pandemics."

### **NIH Launches Analytics Platform for COVID-19 Patient Data**

In an effort to support faster clinical response efforts and develop better treatments, NIH has launched an analytics platform to centralize and secure medical records data from COVID-19 patients across the country. [According to a June 15 news release](#), 35 sites across the country are providing diverse data, harmonized “into a single, common format to enable combined ‘apples to apples’ analyses.” The platform is a part of the National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C), funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS).

### **NIH Director’s Blog: Life-Threatening Blood Clots in COVID-19**

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, recorded [a virtual discussion with National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute \(NHLBI\) Director Gary Gibbons, MD](#), on one SARS-CoV-2 symptom - the formation of life-threatening blood clots. Dr. Gibbons discussed the different locations where blood clots are being observed, from lungs to veins and arteries throughout the body, and the research being conducted to understand how the coronavirus affects blood vessels. Dr. Gibbons highlighted NHLBI researchers are participating in the [Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines \(ACTIV\)](#) partnership to develop clinical trials on the use of anticoagulants to prevent COVID-19-related blood clots.

### **Marketplace: Scientific Research Trying to Get Back into Gear**

[A June 10 episode of Marketplace](#) details first-hand examples of interruptions faced by researchers across the country as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Labs forced to shut down in just days faced difficult decisions about how to preserve research materials and are now looking towards a long ramp to re-starting their research programs and clinical trials, including the significant financial burden COVID-19 has placed on researchers.

## **Ad Hoc Member Resources**

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### **COVID-19 - Back to Campus: A Course on COVID-19 Safety**

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) has collaborated with member institutions and CITI Program to [launch a complimentary course to train research faculty and team members, research staff, students, and other staff at medical schools and research organizations on COVID-19 safety](#) as they return to campus this fall. The highlights of the course include a discussion of recommendations from NIH, CDC, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, as well as optional modules on specific research areas. Organizations may subscribe to this free course by October 1, and learners will receive a CITI Program completion report as evidence of successful training. [Download a demo and learn more about the course here.](#)

### **United for Medical Research: Unprecedented Impact Fact Sheets**

United for Medical Research (UMR) recently released Part 1 in [a series of fact sheets to examine the unprecedented impact that COVID-19 is having on biomedical research](#). From a laser-like focus by researchers, medical professionals and life sciences and biopharmaceutical companies worldwide to understand, mitigate, treat and eradicate the pandemic, to massive disruptions to ongoing research in all fields that is jeopardizing important work, stalling life-saving clinical trials and upending the career paths of many

graduate students and early career scientists, COVID-19 is touching all aspects of our biomedical research enterprise. [Part 1 in the series focuses on the effort to combat COVID-19.](#)

## Upcoming Events

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### **ASM Briefing on Pursuing a SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine – June 18**

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) is continuing its virtual briefing series to showcase the latest science behind [COVID-19 Diagnostics, Vaccines, and Therapeutics](#). We invite you to join us for the conclusion of the series (Part 3, [flyer attached](#)) **Thursday, June 18 at 2:00 pm Eastern**, “From Remdesivir to Human Convalescent Plasma: Understanding COVID-19 Therapeutic Development.” ASM experts will discuss how scientists are leveraging decades of basic and clinical research to bring innovative and effective therapies to the market for COVID-19, including groundbreaking work into the use of human convalescent plasma, how we can apply knowledge from existing antivirals to the novel disease, and what is needed from Congress and the Administration to ensure safe and effective therapies can get to the patients who need them. [Please register here](#) and contact Mary Lee Watts ([mwatts@asmusa.org](mailto:mwatts@asmusa.org)) with any questions.

### **Research!America Briefing on COVID Impacts to Research Progress – June 18**

Join Research!America and partners on June 18 at 2:00pm EST for a virtual roundtable discussion focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public and private sector-fueled medical progress. Panelists, including National Cancer Institute Director Ned Sharpless, MD, will explore the pandemic’s influence on the research NIH conducts and supports, our nation’s R&D infrastructure, the private sector investment climate, technology transfer and other key variables influencing the pace of medical progress, and opportunities to quickly reboot R&D as we move forward. [Visit the event website](#) for more information and to register.

### **AACR Virtual Annual Meeting II – June 22-24**

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) will hold its Virtual Annual Meeting II, June 22-24, with hundreds of presentations highlighting the latest discoveries across the spectrum of cancer research. The Opening Plenary Session on Monday, June 22 will feature remarks from House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** and Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee Chairman **Roy Blunt**. On Tuesday, June 23, NCI Director **Ned Sharpless** will present his address. On Wednesday, June 24, NIH Director **Francis Collins** will provide opening remarks for one of two special sessions on COVID-19 and Cancer Research. Additionally, and in response to the tragic events of the past couple of weeks, AACR President **Tony Ribas** will be moderating a special session titled, “Racism and Racial Inequities in Cancer Research” on Monday, June 22. **Kenneth Frazier**, CEO, Merck, and **Levi Garraway**, CMO, Roche, will be among the eight panelists. Registration for the entire meeting is free and open to all who are interested. [Please visit the meeting website](#) for more information, and to register.

### **Webinar on An Inside Look at the National Eye Institute (NEI) – June 26**

The National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (NAEVR) and Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR) are co-hosting a webinar entitled An Inside Look at NEI featuring

Michael Steinmetz, PhD, Director of Extramural Science Programs. The webinar will take place on June 26 from 1:00 – 2:00 pm EST and will address the application review process, budgets and funding policy, and special initiatives, including trans-NIH and trans-agency activities. [Please register here.](#)

## NIH COVID-19 Resources

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[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.

[HHS COVID-19 awards tracking website](#) including data on awards made by all HHS awarding agencies with supplemental appropriations provided through the first three COVID-19 supplemental packages (Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020; Families First Coronavirus Response Act; and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security [CARES] Act).

## Job Postings

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### **FASEB Seeks Associate Director for Legislative Affairs**

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) seeks an experienced [Associate Director for Legislative Affairs](#) to serve as principal representative of FASEB to members of Congress and congressional staff and advise FASEB leadership and the Board of Directors on legislative strategies and advocacy initiatives related to increasing federal funding for and awareness of life sciences research. This position is responsible for developing and executing a successful appropriations strategy and legislative advocacy program on behalf of FASEB and FASEB member societies and coordinating with other stakeholders in the biomedical research advocacy community. Please see the [attached PDF job description](#) and [click here](#) to submit a cover letter, resume, and a short writing sample. For more information about FASEB, visit [www.faseb.org](http://www.faseb.org).

**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).*