



THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

June 22, 2020

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:

United for Medical Research @UMR4NIH June 15

[#COVID—19](#) shines a spotlight on the fact that drug development takes hard work and a long time. In this episode of the Amazing Things Podcast, we look at a technology – tissue chips – that just might speed up this process [#AmazingThings](#) [#keepNIHstrong](#)

OMB Issues Limited Extension of Flexibility Due to COVID-19 Impacts

The [White House Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) issued a memo on June 18](#) allowing federal funding agencies, including NIH, to continue to provide certain administrative flexibility to their grantees in light of COVID-19 impacts to research. The OMB memo replaces one that provided broader flexibility to agencies and expired on June 17. Among other changes, agencies are now directed to allow grantees to use grant money to cover salaries only if those institutions document “their efforts to exhaust other funding sources and reduce overall operational costs.” Further NIH guidance is expected following this update.

House FY 2021 Labor-HHS Bill Set for July 7 Mark Up

House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) sent a [June 18 “Dear Colleague” letter](#) noting that the House Labor-HHS Subcommittee is scheduled to mark up its FY 2021 spending bill at 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 7. All 12 subcommittees will mark up their individual spending bills July 6 through 8, with full committee consideration of the 302(b) subcommittee spending allocations and certain spending bills expected starting July 9 and extending through at least July 16. The outlined schedule does not indicate a date for full committee consideration of the Labor-HHS spending bill, and notes that times are subject to change pending the committee’s ability to secure an additional hearing room for the markups, which Committee Members will be allowed to participate in both remotely and in-person.

NIH Announces New ALS Award Program

[NIH on June 17 announced Accelerating Leading-edge Science in ALS \(ALS2\)](#), a new five-year program focused on innovative research into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a neurodegenerative disease that progressively weakens muscles and causes respiratory

failure. NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, added, “We hope this program will inject new ideas to the field to push us rapidly toward effective therapies,” in reference to the newly established \$25 million investment.

NIA Blog: Combatting Racial Inequality in Aging Research

National Institute on Aging (NIA) Director Richard Hodes, MD, and Deputy Director Marie Bernard, MD, discussed NIA’s efforts to “promote health equity, eliminate health disparities, and enhance the diversity of the scientific workforce” [in a June 17 blog post](#). The NIA leaders highlighted the institute’s COVID’19 health equity work through the Rapid Diagnostic Accelerator for Underrepresented Populations (RADxUP), Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR) designed to increase diversity in the research workforce, and Alzheimer’s Disease Research Centers that prioritize education outreach to underserved communities.

BGOV: Inequality in Medical Research

In response to ongoing protests in support of racial justice, [a June 18 news article in Bloomberg Government](#) (subscription required) discussed historic inequities in medical research and the importance of including diverse participants in research studies. The article reviewed the current state of diversity in medical research, sharing perspective from NIH that “recent decades have seen more participation of women and racial and ethnic minority groups in research. NIH’s goal is to ensure that these trends continue so that the knowledge gained from research is applicable to everyone affected by the disease or condition under study.” Interviewees suggested prioritizing funding for interdisciplinary research teams to ensure diversity in research participant populations and providing adequate funding support for Black scientists are opportunities to address inequalities in medical research.

Requests for Public Comment

NCCIH Seeks Feedback on Strategic Plan – June 30

NIH’s National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) issued an April 27 [request for information](#) on the Center’s five-year strategic plan. According to the RFI, “The NCCIH is developing a new strategic plan to guide the Center’s research efforts and priority setting for 2021 through 2026. Seeking input into the strategic planning process is critical for identification and consideration of research areas and topics to be included in the new plan. NCCIH is requesting input in any or all of 9 topic areas.” [Comments are due](#) by June 30.

NIGMS Seeks Feedback on Strategic Plan – July 17

NIH’s National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) is [requesting feedback](#) on its [draft strategic plan framework](#). A June 8 Feedback Loop blog post explains that the NIGMS is seeking input on the NIGMS’s goals and objectives, additional areas to be included in the framework, performance measures for evaluation, and other suggestions. [Comments are due by July 17](#).

NIDDK Seeks Feedback on Strategic Plan – July 31

NIH’s National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) issued a March 16 [request for information](#) on the institute’s five-year strategic plan. According to

the RFI, “The goal of the process is to develop a broad vision for accelerating research into the causes, prevention, and treatment of diseases and conditions within the Institute’s mission,” and focuses on five broad themes for community input. [Comments are due](#) by July 31.

NINDS Seeks Feedback on Strategic Planning Process

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) is embarking on an institute-wide strategic planning process, and published a [July 2019 request for information](#) on the process. The goal of the process is to tune its practices and policies to its vision and mission, in order to better serve and anticipate the needs of the research and patient communities and the public. The mission of NINDS is to seek fundamental knowledge about the brain and nervous system and to use that knowledge to reduce the burden of neurological disease. Those interested in submitting comments for consideration as NINDS establishes a new strategic plan may still do so [through this form](#).

Upcoming Events

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 **Toni 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 Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR) and the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) 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

[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 four COVID-19 supplemental packages (Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020; Families First Coronavirus Response Act; the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security [CARES] Act; and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act).

Job Postings

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.

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.*