

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – June 24, 2019

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:

The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) [@SfNtweets](#)

Successful efforts to [#FundScience](#) result in research discoveries, public health benefits, and economic growth. Emily Kubicek and [@BoozyBrain](#) demonstrate being an effective [#NeuroAdvocate](#) by relaying this crucial message today on Capitol Hill at the Celebrate Life Sciences Fair.

1. House Passes FY 20 Spending Package Including Labor-HHS Bill

The House of Representatives June 19 approved a four-bill spending package ([H.R. 2740](#)) that includes the FY 2020 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill. Seven Democrats joined all House Republicans in voting against the bill, for a final tally of [226-203](#). The final package maintained the Appropriations Committee-approved funding level of \$41.084 billion for NIH, and also adopted 64 [amendments](#) to the Labor-HHS bill.

The Ad Hoc Group [issued a June 19 statement](#) on the House-passed bill, noting that the \$2 billion increase for NIH “would continue the sustained funding momentum of the last four years by supporting the base budgets of all NIH institutes and centers while also continuing funding for specific initiatives, such as programs established in the 21st Century Cures Act.”

The statement also urged Congress and the White House to raise the overall discretionary budget caps to support sufficient investment in health care priorities in FY 2020. Congress and the administration will need to reach an agreement on topline funding levels for the government before the spending levels in the minibus can be enacted without triggering steep across-the-board cuts through sequestration. The Senate has yet to officially set a timeline for consideration of its FY 2020 spending bills.

2. Congress, White House Continue Budget Negotiations

House and Senate leadership June 19 met again with White House and other administration officials to continue negotiations on a budget caps deal. Meeting participants told reporters that discussions were making some progress. Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) was quoted by reporters that “[budget] numbers are closer than they’ve ever been” in the negotiations but there is still work to be done to reach a bipartisan agreement. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) issued a June 19 [joint statement](#) noting, “While we did not reach an agreement, today’s conversation advanced our bipartisan discussions. If the House and Senate could work their will without interference from the President, we could come to a good agreement much more quickly.”

3. Op-Ed: Federally Funded University Research Transforms Lives

Penn State President Eric Barron authored a June 15 [commentary](#) on the value of federally funded research featured in the *Tribune-Review*. Mr. Barron highlighted the essential role

universities play in conducting basic scientific research in an “environment that supports discovery and entrepreneurship.” The subsequent relationships that universities develop with the private sector are key for economic growth and the bringing new inventions, treatments, and cures to market. Mr. Barron concludes, “Robust investment in federal research is essential to our success as a country, which is why businesses are outspoken advocates for federal investment in research and investment. Without federal funding, many of our country’s most groundbreaking innovations would have never made it out of the starting gate.”

4. *Science*: Government-funded Research Increasingly Fuels Innovation

Researchers in the June 21 issue of *Science* published an [article](#) on the increasing rates of government-funded research in generating patents (subscription required). The authors inspected tens of millions of publications and patent applications since 1926, showing “the proportion of patents relying on federally funded science has outstripped the overall increase in patenting, plateauing since a high of 30.0% in 2011 ... [Additionally], the absolute number of patents that rely on federally supported research has almost doubled recently, from 22,647 in 2008 to 45,220 in 2017.” The authors cite previous research that approximately 10% of NIH grants generate patents. The research article is also covered in [STAT](#).

5. NINDS Director’s Message: Advancing Science through a Commitment to Diversity

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) Director Walter Koroshetz, MD, authored a June 20 [message](#) about NINDS’s efforts to increase diversity in order to advance science. NINDS has developed a variety of materials to assist conference organizers in increasing diversity in speaker panels and conference participation. Dr. Koroshetz concludes, “The work we do together to seek fundamental knowledge about the brain and nervous system ... is made stronger by a workforce that is diverse and representative of our current society. Improving representation at meetings and conferences ... is one way we can work to address biases and barriers that have limited the inclusion of underrepresented groups in the scientific workforce and leadership for far too long.”

6. NIAMS Posts Draft Strategic Plan for FY 2020-2024

The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) June 24 [published](#) a request for information (RFI) on a draft FY 2020-2024 strategic plan via the Federal Register. The institute seeks stakeholder feedback on the draft in advance of the September 2019 meeting of the NIAMS Advisory Council. Feedback on the RFI is due July 12 and should be submitted [electronically](#).

Upcoming Hill Briefings and Other Events

7. Congressional Briefing on HPV-related Cancers – June 27

Please join a group of organizations working on cancer prevention, screening and treatment for a briefing titled “Let’s End HPV-related Cancers.” The event will take place on Thursday, June 27 from 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm in Room 2044 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The briefing is hosted by the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), Moffitt Cancer Center, and Biden Cancer Initiative in partnership with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI), Prevent Cancer Foundation, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, and the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). Please see the event [flyer](#) for additional details, and [RSVP here](#).

8. Congressional Briefing on the Science of Aging – June 27

Please join the Friends of the National Institute on Aging for a Congressional briefing titled, “The Science of Aging: Groundbreaking Research Supported by the National Institute on Aging.” The briefing will be held on Thursday, June 27 from 2:00-3:00 pm in Capitol Visitor Center 268.

Please [RSVP here](#).

9. Congressional Briefing on Dry Eye and “Test Your Tears” Screening – July 10

Please join the Alliance for Eye and Vision Research as they co-host a Congressional briefing during Dry Eye Awareness Month. The briefing, “Ongoing Impact of the TFOS DEWS II™ Dry Eye Clinical Practice and Research,” will be held on Wednesday, July 10 from 12-1:15pm in 2043 Rayburn House Office Building. A simultaneous screening for eye health will occur from 11:30am-2pm. Please see attached for additional detail, and RSVP to Dina Beaumont at dinabeau@aol.com.

10. Rally for Medical Research – September 18-19

Join a broad coalition of stakeholders representing millions of patients and other advocates from the medical research advocacy community on September 18-19, 2019, for the next Rally for Medical Research Hill Day and help raise awareness of the urgent need for continued investment in the NIH to improve health, spur more progress, inspire more hope, and save more lives. Please visit the [event website](#) for more information and to register. Registration closes August 30.

11. NIH Fall Regional Seminar – Nov. 6-8

The NIH is hosting the Fall 2019 NIH Regional Seminar on Program Funding and Grants Administration in Phoenix, AZ, from Wednesday, Nov. 6- Friday Nov. 8. Visit the [website](#) to learn more about the program and to [register](#). Early registration rates apply through June 30.

Job Postings

University of Florida Seeks Assistant Director of Federal Relations

The University of Florida Seeks an Assistant Director of Federal Relations for the Washington, D.C. office. Essentials job functions include: manage and execute the government relations program for a portfolio of the University's federal interests; anticipate, monitor and analyze federal policy; and more. Details and application instructions are available on the [job posting site](#).

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.