



## THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

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

June 25, 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

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Director Anthony Fauci, MD, was one of four government officials testifying before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce in a hearing titled, "[Oversight of the Trump Administration's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)" on June 23. Regarding NIH's efforts to combat COVID-19, Dr. Fauci noted that NIH is testing multiple vaccines, adding that he is "cautiously optimistic" that a vaccine could be available later this year, or early in 2021.

#### Senate HELP Committee Holds Hearing on Preparedness

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee heard expert testimony on June 23 at the hearing, "[COVID-19: Lessons Learned to Prepare for the Next Pandemic](#)." Among several recommendations from the witness panel was a recommendation of sustained, robust funding in public health. The hearing follows the release of Committee Chair Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) white paper, "[Preparing for the Next Pandemic](#)," outlining five recommendations to address future pandemics, including accelerating research and development and maintain strong investments in NIH. The HELP committee seeks stakeholder feedback submitted to [PandemicPreparedness@help.senate.gov](mailto:PandemicPreparedness@help.senate.gov) by June 26.

#### Representatives Introduce RISE Act to Provide Research Relief

On June 24, Reps. DeGette (D-Colo.), Upton (R-Mich.), Johnson (D-Texas), Lucas (R-Okla.), Eshoo (D-Calif.), and Gonzalez (R-Ohio) [introduced the Research Investment to Spark the Economy Act \(RISE Act\)](#), which authorizes approximately \$26 billion in supplemental funding for federal research agencies, including NIH, to ameliorate the tremendous disruption to federally funded research from COVID-19. The bill also provides for temporary regulatory relief due to the pandemic. According to the press release, "The legislation comes just two months after DeGette and Upton [led 180 Members of Congress](#) in sending a letter to House leadership urging them to support the American research enterprise and provide it with the additional funding it now desperately needs."

#### House Infrastructure Bill Proposes Funds for Research Infrastructure

On June 21, House Democrats introduced a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure bill, [the Moving Forward Act \(H.R.2\)](#). Included in Sec. 34013 of the proposal is an authorization of \$4.5 billion in funding for a pilot grant program “for the improvement, renovation, or modernization of clinical laboratories that will improve SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 testing and response activities, including the expansion and enhancement of testing capacity at such laboratories.” Additional information is in the [Section-by-Section](#), and [Fact Sheet](#).

### **USA Today: NIH Director Collins Discusses Importance of Building Trust in Minority Communities**

In a [June 23 interview with USA Today](#), NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, discussed the “heartbreaking” disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black and Hispanic communities, and the importance of building stronger relationships with minority communities to build trust as COVID-19 vaccine development progresses. Collins also cited ongoing efforts by the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities “to recruit more racial and ethnic groups to medical studies and address health disparities,” including efforts to increase participation in the All of Us Research Program. Dr. Collins recently joined the membership of the White House coronavirus task force.

### **COVID-19 Serology Study Publishes Recommendations on Serology Testing**

The conclusions and recommendations on COVID-19 serology studies developed in from the COVID-19 Serology Studies workshop have been [published in Immunity](#). According to the [June 23 NIH news release](#), the group of over 300 scientists and clinicians from academia, industry, and federal agencies, including scientists at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), recommend that additional research is needed to understand what a positive SARS-CoV-2 antibody test means for protection against subsequent infection, and that “serology tests should not be used as a stand-alone tool to make decision about personal safety related to SARS-CoV-2 exposure”.

### **Under the Poliscope: How NIH Addresses Sexual Misconduct**

In a [June 24 Under the Poliscope blog post](#), NIH Associate Director for Science Policy Carrie Wolinetz, PhD, and NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Mike Lauer, MD, shared another update from the agency regarding its efforts to combat sexual harassment in science. NIH now has [a webpage outlining a detailed description of the agency’s process](#) for handling allegations of sexual misconduct by NIH grantees at a recipient institution, including the process for submitting allegations, NIH assessment guidelines, and actions taken depending on the outcome of the case review by NIH.

## **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.](#)

## Upcoming Events

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### **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.](#)

### **Congressional Briefing: COVID-19 Lifestyle Changes and Vision**

The Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR) and Tear Film and Ocular Surface Society (TFOS) are co-hosting a Dry Eye Awareness Month Congressional briefing titled, “How Lifestyle Changes During the COVID-19 Pandemic Can Affect Vision.” The briefing will take place Wednesday, July 8, from 12:00-1:15pm EST at 601 New Jersey Ave. NW and via live stream. [Additional information is available on the briefing flyer.](#) [Please RSVP to Dina Beaumont](#) for live stream information.

## 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).*