



THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

June 29, 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:

Association of American Medical Colleges @AAMCtoday – June 24

Because of [#COVID19](#), scientists were forced to put life-saving research on hold. The [#RISEAct](#) would provide [#ResearchRelief](#) to help labs across the country restart this important work. Learn more about the bill: <http://ow.ly/HNTT50AqVhU> [#ResearchMeansHope](#)

Senate Appropriations Hearing on Operation Warp Speed

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, will testify before the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Subcommittee to review the coronavirus vaccine development program Operation Warp Speed. [The hearing will take place on Thursday, July 2 at 10:00 a.m. EST](#) and will be webcast. Dr. Collins will be joined by CDC Director Robert Redfield, MD, and Gary Disbrow, PhD, acting director of Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

HELP Hearing: Update on Getting Back to Work and School

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Director Anthony Fauci, MD, will testify before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in a hearing titled, ["COVID-19: Update on Progress Toward Safely Getting Back to Work and Back to School."](#) The hearing will take place on Tuesday, June 30 at 10:00 a.m. EST and will be webcast. Additional federal witnesses include CDC Director Robert Redfield, MD, Assistant Secretary for Health Adm. Brett Giroir, MD, and FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn, MD.

Science: COVID-19 and Cancer

National Institute of Cancer (NCI) Director Ned Sharpless, MD, authored [a June 19 editorial in Science on the impact of COVID-19 on cancer outcomes](#). Sharpless describes the possibility of increased cancer deaths due to reduced screening, diagnoses, and treatments while patients are hesitant to visit medical facilities because of the coronavirus. He also discusses the impact on reduced medical research, noting, "Given the long timeline between basic cancer research and changes to cancer care, the effects of

pausing research today may lead to slowdowns in cancer progress for many years to come.”

BLaw: Money for New Clinical Trials to be Tight After Virus Shuts Labs

National Institute of Cancer (NCI) Director Ned Sharpless, MD, also shared the coronavirus impacts to cancer research in [a June 22 interview covered in Bloomberg Law](#). Regarding the costs of ramping back up research projects, including clinical trials for cancer therapeutics, Sharpless noted, “That’s really starting to become a major concern of mine for ’21. “We will need budgetary support to continue our commitments to things like clinical trials.” Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) addressed the low paylines at NCI at a recent American Association for Cancer Research virtual meeting, stating, “You obviously don’t want to turn away promising research proposals when they had a chance to do it. We’re going to work to see what we can do to solve that problem.”

NIH Releases Guidance on OMB Memo on Administrative Flexibilities

NIH released guidance on June 25 in response to the [June 18 memo posted by the White House Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\)](#) on federal funding agencies continuing to provide certain administrative flexibility to their grantees. The NIH guidance states that “[r]ecipients are authorized to continue to charge salaries and benefits to active [agency] awards consistent with the recipients’ policy of paying salaries” and, as directed by OMB, state that “recipients must exhaust other available funding sources to sustain its workforce and implement necessary steps to save overall operational costs.” There will not be additional guidance from OMB or from the agencies on what it means to exhaust other funding sources, but documenting that the institution has, for example, confirmed that endowments are not available for salary support or that the institution is not eligible for Paycheck Protection Program or Main Street Lending Program would be beneficial.

Sign On Letter to HHS Secretary to Extend COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

The American Society for Microbiology, American Public Health Association, Association of Public Health Laboratories, National Association of County and City Health Officials and Trust for America’s Health invite you to join them in signing a letter to HHS Secretary Azar urging him to renew the current public health emergency (PHE) declaration for at least an additional 90 days before it expires on July 25. It is imperative that the federal government continue to deploy all resources and authorities necessary to protect the public, spur the development of medical countermeasures, and assist states and localities as they continue to respond to this urgent situation. [Sign on here](#). Questions? Contact Mary Lee Watts, ASM Director of Federal Affairs, at mwatts@asmusa.org.

Requests for Public Comment

Deadline Extended: NCCIH Seeks Feedback on Strategic Plan – July 13

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 July 13.

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](#).

NIH Requests Comments on Improving Biomedical Research Involving Animal Models

The NIH posted a [request for information](#) (RFI) “aimed at enhancing rigor, transparency, and translatability to improve biomedical and behavioral research involving animal models,” according to an Open Mike [blog post](#) by NIH deputy director for extramural research Mike Lauer, MD. A [working group](#) of the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director will consider responses to this request as they draft their final report expected in December. Comments should be [submitted online](#) and are due July 31.

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

Congressional Briefing: COVID-19 Lifestyle Changes and Vision – July 8

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

[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.*