Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
July 12, 2021

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:

**Emory University @EmoryUniversity – July 9**

In a time of great stress, grad students and post-docs @EmoryUniversity @GeorgiaTech have been participating in “Becoming a Resilient Scientist,” a virtual pilot program sponsored by @NIH aimed at mental health and wellness concerns to alleviate stress. [https://links.emory.edu/9Z](https://links.emory.edu/9Z)

**House Labor-HHS Bill Proposes $49 Billion for NIH in FY 2022**

The House Labor-HHS- Education Appropriations Subcommittee marked up and approved its [FY 2022 spending bill](https://www.house.gov/44863), including a proposed $49 billion for the NIH, on July 12. The accompanying [summary](https://www.house.gov/44863) describes the $6.5 billion increase for the NIH over FY 2021 as $3 billion for the new ARPA-H initiative and $3.5 billion for existing institutes and centers “which supports an increase of no less than 5 percent for each Institute and Center to support a wide range of biomedical and behavioral research, as well as targeted investments in several high-priority areas.”

The Ad Hoc Group issued a [press statement](https://www.adhocgroupformedicalresearch.org/) commending the inclusion of a proposed $49 billion for the agency in FY 2022, and thanking Subcommittee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) and Ranking Member Tom Cole (R-Okla.) for their longstanding leadership which has been instrumental in supporting the NIH and the groundbreaking science that it yields.

The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to mark up the FY 2022 Labor-HHS spending bill on [Thursday, July 15, at 10am EDT](https://www.house.gov/44863).

**Politico: Skeptics Question If Biden’s New Science Agency Is a Breakthrough or More Bureaucracy**

A July 5 [article in Politico](https://www.politico.com) included commentary from inside and outside the Biden administration on the president’s Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA-H) initiative for the NIH. The proposed $6.5 billion budget to incorporate ARPA-H into the NIH has raised concerns within the research community and in Congress about
whether it will bring a new approach to old problems, become duplicative, or change the existing culture of the agency. NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, noted that ARPA-H is not intended to become another NIH institute, and that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed his thinking about what would be possible through a targeted initiative like ARPA-H.

NIH Seeking Feedback on Consent Language Resource to Foster Participant Specimen and Data Sharing
The NIH has been working with stakeholders to identify informed consent language capable of effectively describing how data and biospecimens will be stored and shared for future research reported NIH Director of Extramural Research Michael Lauer, MD, on July 2. As a result, the NIH has developed a consent language resource that describes points to consider when addressing this issue. It also provides sample consent language that researchers can tailor based on their own unique study needs. The NIH needs feedback on the utility and usability of this resource. The deadline to submit comments is September 29, 2021. More information can be found here.

An Update on Implementing ACD Recommendations on Changing the Culture to End Sexual Harassment
In a continued effort to address sexual harassment, the NIH has implemented some of the recommendations of the NIH Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) Working Group on Changing the Culture to End Sexual Harassment reported NIH Director of Extramural Research Michael Lauer, MD, in a June 29 blog post. Lauer presented an update on the working group’s efforts at the June ACD meeting.

NIH COVID-19 Testing Initiative Funds Additional Research Projects to Safely Return Children to In-Person School
The NIH is funding five research projects to safely return students and staff to in-person school in areas with vulnerable and underserved populations, reported a July 2 NIH news release. The awards are the second installment of the Safe Return to School Diagnostic Testing Initiative, launched earlier this year as part of the NIH Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics Underserved Populations (RADx-UP) program. The new projects will specifically focus on implementing COVID-19 testing regimens for students younger than age 12, exploring the influence of vaccination, addressing vaccine hesitancy, and seeking information on circulating variants and breakthrough vaccinations.

NIH-Funded Screening Study Builds Case for Frequent COVID-19 Antigen Testing
In a funded research study conducted by NIH’s RADx initiative, researchers found that both antigen and PCR testing methods were equally effective in detecting SARS-CoV-2, reported a June 30 NIH news release. Because antigen tests at the point of care or at home can deliver immediate results and are less costly than laboratory tests, these results suggest that antigen tests could be a highly effective screening tool to prevent disease outbreaks.

JAMA Ophthalmology: Impact of COVID-19 Lab Closures on Emerging Vision Scientists
JAMA Ophthalmology published a special communication on the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on future vision scientists on July 1 based off of the Alliance for Eye and Vision Research’s September 2020 video conversation with 22 emerging vision scientists. The researchers noted striking disruptions to patient-based research, limits on the types of clinical research that could be conducted, loss of research time for researchers with young children, especially women, loss of training time, and more.

Join the Friends of ORWH Coalition
The Friends of the NIH Office of Research on Women’s Health (ORWH) invites new members to join. The newly launched coalition is composed of organizations committed to addressing sex and gender disparities in health and prioritizing research gaps and unmet needs to advance women’s health and its primary goal is to advocate for federal support of ORWH’s mission to “strengthen and enhance the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of illnesses in women and to enhance research related to diseases and conditions that affect women.”

For more information, view the website, and to join, please complete this form. If you have questions, please contact policy@swhr.org.

Sign-on Opportunity: Urge Congress to Lead COVID-19 Origins Investigations with Science
The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) invites you to join us in sending a letter to key Congressional leaders urging that any investigations into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic lead with science. You can view the letter and sign on here. Note the tight timeline: deadline to sign on is NOON on Wednesday, July 14. Contact Mary Lee Watts (mwatts@asmusa.org) with questions.

Upcoming Events

A Lifestyle Epidemic: Ocular Surface Disease – July 13
In recognition of Dry Eye Awareness Month, Alliance For Eye And Vision Research (AEVR) in conjunction with Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society (TFOS), will be holding a globally streamed congressional briefing on July 13, 2021, from 12:00-1:00 PM EDT. This interview-style discussion led by AEVR Executive Director James Jorkasky and key leaders from TFOS will address the latest in lifestyle and environmental factors that result in dry eye.

To attend on-site/receive Live Stream link, RSVP to: 202-407-8325 or Dinabeau@aol.com. More information about the meeting and other upcoming AEVR events can be found on the AEVR website.

Apply for National Eczema Association Research Grants – Deadline August 31
Applications are being accepted for the 2021 National Eczema Association (NEA) research grant cycle. Grants for junior and senior investigators ranging from $5,000-$150,000 are available. Applications are due August 31. Additional details are on the NEA website.

Virtual Rally for Medical Research - September 22-23
The Rally for Medical Research is held every September and includes more than 300 national organizations coming together to call on our nation’s policymakers to make funding for National Institutes of Health (NIH) a national priority and raise awareness about the importance of continued investment in medical research that leads to more progress, more hope, and more lives saved. This year’s event will be held virtually on September 22-23. For more information to register, please visit rallyformedicalresearch.org.

Requests for Public Comment

NCI: Seeking Stakeholder Input on Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion in the Cancer Research Workforce – July 15
The NIH National Cancer Institute (NCI) issued an RFI “on how to enhance diversity and inclusion in the cancer research workforce, including enhancing the participation of individuals who are underrepresented in cancer research, such as underrepresented minorities (URM).” This RFI is part of NCI’s Equity and Inclusion Program convened to identify opportunities and priorities that will promote equity and social justice in three areas: 1) Enhancing Cancer Health Disparities Research; 2) Diversifying the Cancer Research Workforce; and 3) Ensuring an Inclusive and Diverse Community at NCI. The response deadline is July 15, 2021.

Public Comment on Proposed National Priorities for Health – August 27
PCORI’s work is guided by a set of national priorities and a research agenda that provide a framework for our funding of patient-centered comparative clinical effectiveness research. Beginning in 2020, we embarked on a strategic initiative to identify new priorities to direct our work in the years ahead.

In the latest step in this process, our Board of Governors at its June meeting approved posting for public comment five proposed National Priorities for Health developed in consultation with hundreds of stakeholders, advisors, and experts. We invite your comments on the proposed National Priorities for Health during the public comment period June 28 to August 27 and look forward to sharing an overview of the proposed national priorities on a June 29 webinar.

NEW NIH Seeks Input on New Resource for Developing Consent Language for Future Use of Data and Biospecimens – September 29
The NIH is requesting information from stakeholders on the utility and usability of a resource that includes sample language and points to consider when developing informed consent documents for data and biospecimen sharing (NOT-OD-21-131). Stakeholder feedback on this resource will be essential in ensuring this resource is maximally useful to the community. NIH emphasizes that any use of the sample informed consent language would be completely voluntary and will not be required.

The comment window is open for 90 days and NIH has established a web portal for responses (https://osp.od.nih.gov/rfi-comment-informed-consent-sharing/). To ensure
consideration, comments must be received no later than September 29, 2021. Questions may be sent to SciencePolicy@mail.nih.gov

**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.

**Funding opportunities specific to COVID-19** lists active and expired funding opportunities across NIH related to SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 research.

**NIH COVID-19 Research Website** provides a central location for trusted, up-to-date, accurate information about NIH research and our strategic role in COVID-19 research.

**HHS COVID-19 awards tracking website** including data on awards made by all HHS awarding agencies with supplemental appropriations.

**Combat COVID website** including information for those who have never had COVID-19, have been infected, have recovered, and for health care providers.

**Job Postings**

**APA Seeks Senior Directors, Congressional and Federal Relations**

The American Psychological Association (APA) Advocacy Office is recruiting for two Senior Directors of Congressional and Federal Relations. Both positions focus primarily on science government relations: to serve as liaisons for federal science funding agencies, cover science policy issues and represent APA in coalitions and partnerships (portfolios to be determined). One of the positions is Masters degree preferred; the other is doctoral degree preferred. You can apply via the APA Jobs gateway.

**American Thoracic Society Seeks Associate Director, Government Relations**

The American Thoracic Society is accepting applications for following position: Associate Director, Government Relations. The Associate Director is responsible for developing and maintaining an ATS advocacy strategy for assigned issue areas. Reports to Chief, Advocacy & Government Relations. B.S. or B.A. degree in public health, health policy, health administration, biological sciences or related area with a minimum of five years congressional experience as an aide or legislative representative.
in a voluntary health organization or professional society. Excellent written and oral communication skills required. Additional details and application instructions are here.

**ASM Seeks Senior Specialist, Regulatory Affairs**
The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) is seeking a Senior Specialist, Regulatory Affairs. The Senior Specialist will play an integral role on ASM’s federal affairs team by monitoring, analyzing and reporting on regulatory activity that has the potential to affect the microbial sciences community in assigned policy areas, with a particular focus on diagnostic regulation, food safety, coding and reimbursement. The specialist will also identify opportunities for ASM federal policy engagement with regulatory agencies such as the FDA and CMS, and help build relationships with agency officials. For more information go here.

**IADR/AADR Seek Assistant Director of Government Affairs**
The International and American Associations for Dental Research are seeking an Assistant Director of Government Affairs to recommend and implement the Associations’ policy priorities related to dental, oral and craniofacial research; the federal research enterprise, including the scientific workforce; scholarly publishing; international collaboration and more. Additional information and application instructions can be found here.

**NHLBI Seeks Science Policy Analyst**
NIH’s National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) seeks a Science Policy Analyst to assist in the institute’s engagement with Congress. The analyst’s role will include reviewing proposed legislation, responding to Congressional inquiries, preparing public outreach materials, and more. Additional information and instructions for applying can be found here.

---

**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.