



## THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

### Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

August 3, 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:

#### American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network @ACSCAN – August 1

Thank you! House passed their budget for next year w/an increase in fed cancer research funding, thanks, in part, to your hard work. But it wasn't quite enough to continue progress for lifesaving treatments & cures. We'll keep fighting for enough research \$\$ to save lives.

#### **House Passes FY 2021 Labor-HHS Spending Bill**

The House of Representatives passed [217-197](#) a second "[minibus](#)" [spending package](#) of FY 2021 spending bills (H.R. 7617) on July 31, including the FY 2021 Labor-HHS-Education spending bill. The bill includes \$47 billion in funding for NIH, including \$5 billion in emergency supplemental spending. The final package was passed after consideration of hundreds of amendments to the six-bill package. The House Appropriations Committee website includes an [amendment tracker](#) for additional detail of amendments adopted in the final bill. Senate activity on the FY 2021 spending bills has not yet been scheduled.

#### **Negotiations Stall on Next COVID-19 Relief Package**

Congressional and White House leaders are continuing negotiations on the next COVID-19 emergency supplemental package following the release of a series of COVID-19 emergency relief bills by Senate Republicans on July 27, together considered the [Health Education and Liability Protection and Schools \(HEALS\) Act](#). The package includes a proposed \$15.5 billion for the NIH. The Ad Hoc Group released a [July 28 press statement](#) urging both the House and Senate to work quickly to enact at least \$15.5 billion in emergency supplemental funding for NIH in the next COVID-19 emergency spending package.

#### **Fauci Testifies Before House Subcommittee on Coronavirus**

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Director Anthony Fauci, MD, [testified before the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis](#) on Friday, July 31, at a hybrid virtual hearing, "The Urgent Need for A National Plan to Contain The Coronavirus." Dr. Fauci outlined NIH's strategic plan on coronavirus, including the

development of diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines during his opening statement. During questioning, Dr. Fauci shared cautious optimism that a safe and effective SARS-CoV-2 vaccine will be available by the end of 2020 and into 2021.

### **NIH Human Fetal Tissue Ethics Advisory Board Holds First Meeting**

The NIH held a virtual meeting of its [Human Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board](#) on July 31, beginning with a one-hour public comment period followed by a closed session to review grant applications that had been recommended for funding through the peer review system and which propose to use human fetal tissue. The [membership of the Board](#) was announced the morning of July 31.

### **NIH Announces Investments in New COVID-19 Testing Through RADx**

NIH's Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) initiative has awarded \$248.7 million in contracts to diagnostic companies for the timely development of novel SARS-CoV-2 testing technologies, according to [a July 31 news release](#). The contracts have been awarded to develop seven biomedical diagnostic testing companies to support several different testing platforms. National Institutes of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering Director Bruce Tromberg, PhD, noted that the new technologies will "increase U.S. testing capacity exponentially over the next few months. These and other technologies emerging from our RADx pipeline will guide patient care and inform public health measures to stop the spread of the virus and leave us better equipped to address future pathogens and other diseases."

### ***Open Mike:* Updates on Standardized Electronic Health Record Data**

Several NIH and Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) leaders authored [a guest blog post on July 31](#) updating NIH grantees on opportunities to leverage clinical data from electronic health records. A recently published ONC final rule requires the adoption of the U.S. Core Data for Interoperability (USCDI) standard for electronic health record systems, establishing a "standardized set of healthcare data classes, data elements, and associated vocabulary standards in the USCDI v1 to enable greater interoperable exchange of health information for clinical care and research."

## Requests for Public Comment

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### **NIDA Seeks Feedback on Strategic Plan – August 7**

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) [issued a Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) seeking feedback on an outline for the NIDA Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025. NIDA specifically seeks feedback on: the scientific goals and actions articulated in the framework including additional areas of opportunity that should be included in the plan; drawbacks or challenges to accomplishing these goals and actions; cross-cutting research topics and approaches articulated in the framework; and ways to ensure widespread dissemination and implementation of the plan. You may submit your comments via email to: [NIDAStrategicPlan@nida.nih.gov](mailto:NIDAStrategicPlan@nida.nih.gov).

### **Improving Biomedical Research Involving Animal Models – August 21**

The NIH seeks feedback from stakeholders on rigor and transparency in animal research, optimizing the relevance of animal models to human biology and disease, and the impact

of research culture in selecting animal models for research. Additional details are provided in the [request for information](#). Comments are due by August 21 and must be submitted electronically on the submission website: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/rfi/rfi.cfm?ID=108>.

### **OLAW Seeks Feedback on Semiannual Animal Inspections – October 22**

The NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare ([OLAW](#)) is seeking stakeholder input on flexibilities available for conducting semiannual animal facility inspections. Specifically, OLAW seeks input on flexibilities available to Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees for conducting semiannual inspections of their animal facilities. Additional details are provided in the [request for information](#). Comments must be [submitted electronically by October 22](#).

### **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**

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### **Friends of NIA Webinar on COVID-19 and Aging Research – August 6**

Please join the Friends of the National Institute on Aging (FoNIA) and our distinguished panelists on Thursday, August 6, 2020, 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm, EDT for a webinar on COVID: Opportunities and Obstacles in Aging Research and Caregiving which will explore the nexus between the COVID-19 virus and older adults. Specifically, our three panelists will discuss: what data around COVID-19 tells us about existing racial, economic and geographical health disparities; how aging research can be more inclusive in light of COVID exposed disparities; opportunities to study care needs of older adults and their caregivers before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic; and how aging impacts the effectiveness of potential COVID treatments and vaccines. [Please register here](#).

### **Inclusion Across the Lifespan Workshop – September 2**

NIH is hosting the second in a series of Inclusion Across the Lifespan workshops to provide lessons learned regarding the inclusion of pediatric and older populations in clinical studies, with evidence-based practical advice to the scientific community. The workshop will bring together individuals with a variety of backgrounds in clinical study development and execution, with focus on pediatric and geriatric populations, and consideration of special populations across the life course. The workshop will take place on Wednesday, September 2, from 10:30am – 5:30pm EST. [Please register in advance](#).

### **Virtual Rally for Medical Research – Sept. 16-17**

The Rally for Medical Research is held every September and includes more than 300 national organizations coming together in support of 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 16-17. For more information and to register, please visit <https://rallyformedicalresearch.org>.

## 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.

[Funding opportunities specific to COVID-19](#) lists active and expired funding opportunities across NIH related to SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 research.

[HHS COVID-19 awards tracking website](#) including data on awards made by all HHS awarding agencies with supplemental appropriations.

## Job Postings

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### **ASM Seeks a Regulatory Affairs Specialist**

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM)'s Policy and Advocacy Department seeks an experienced Regulatory Affairs Specialist to strengthen its presence with federal agencies, specifically CMS and FDA, and proactively identify opportunities for ASM federal policy engagement on clinical and regulatory matters. This person will monitor, analyze, and report on regulatory activity that has the potential to affect the microbial sciences and clinical microbiology community in assigned policy areas, and work with ASM members and staff to develop position statements, testimony, and regulatory comments. View the full job description and [apply here](#). For more information about ASM, go to: [www.asm.org](http://www.asm.org)

### **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).*