

## Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – August 13, 2018

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:

Per **NIH Director Francis Collins** [@NIHDirector](#) – many lawmakers are also taking advantage of August recess to learn more about NIH advances.

“Great to have [@RepRoKhanna](#) at [#NIH today](#)! With a discussion that included new advances in neuroscience and genomics, Big Data, and food allergies, we had a very productive afternoon.”

“Thank you [@SenatorTomUdall](#) for visiting [#NIH today](#) to talk about the potential of research on the microbiome. We humans are a superorganism, and understanding our microbial partners better may help us learn how to prevent and treat a long list of illnesses.”

### 1. Appropriations Update

The Senate will return August 15 from its shorted August recess. Following floor consideration and votes on two nominations, it is expected that the full Senate will move on to consider the Labor-HHS and Defense appropriations bill package, likely the week of August 20.

### 2. #ThisIsNIH Social Media Takeover Series

Over the next eight months, NIH communications staff will take over various social media accounts to highlight how tax dollars are improving Americans' health. The [series began](#) August 6, keep an eye out for the #ThisIsNIH tag from your favorite Institutes and Centers!

### 3. Murray, DeLauro Letter to NIH Director on Sexual Harassment Policies

House and Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Committee Ranking Members Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) August 6 wrote a [letter](#) asking NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, about NIH's plans to address harassment and discrimination among NIH-funded research settings. Specifically, they referenced a June National Academies [report](#), showing rates of sexual harassment of women in academic sciences, and inquired

### 4. President Nominates University of Oklahoma Meteorologist to Direct OSTP

President Trump August 1 [announced](#) his nomination of Kelvin Droegemeier, PhD, to be the next Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Dr. Droegemeier, a meteorologist by training, has an extensive background in both research and policy. He currently serves as the Vice President for Research at the University of Oklahoma, as well as the Cabinet Secretary of Science and Technology under the Governor of Oklahoma. Dr. Droegemeier was previously appointed to the National Science Board by both Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Last year, Dr. Droegemeier [testified](#) to the House Appropriations Labor-HHS subcommittee on the role of Facilities and Administration (F&A) costs in supporting NIH-funded research. The role of science adviser has been vacant since January 2017. Next steps in the confirmation process include a hearing and favorable report

from the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, followed by approval from the full Senate.

## **5. White House Releases Memorandum on Agency Priorities for 2020**

The White House released its 2018 [Memorandum](#) for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, which highlights its "R&D priorities and provides guidance to agencies as they formulate their Fiscal Year 2020 budget submissions." The document includes "American Medical Innovation" as a priority, emphasizing basic research, health data use and security, public health threats such as the opioid epidemic, and the care of veterans and aging adults. The White House also includes "partnering with industry and academia" under "R&D priority practices."

## **6. Updates on Diversity within the NIH-funded Workforce**

The GAO August 10 published a [report](#) titled "NIH Research: Action Needed to Ensure Workforce Diversity Strategic Goals Are Achieved." This report was included as a provision in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act. GAO found that, while NIH has a diversity strategic plan and has taken positive steps in establishing a Chief Officer of Scientific Workforce Diversity position, NIH still lacks concrete measures to assess its progress. GAO recommended that "the Director of NIH should develop quantitative metrics, evaluation details, and time frames to assess NIH's efforts to diversify its scientific workforce against its diversity strategic plan goals, and take action as needed."

On August 7, NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Mike Lauer, MD, used a [blog post](#) to highlight a recent FASEB Journal publication that studied diversity in investigators identified on grant applications and awards between 2009 and 2016. The study showed that while still underrepresented, "women, underrepresented racial minorit[ies], and Hispanic researchers comprise a higher percentage in both the Early Stage Investigator (ESI) and New Investigators (NI) groups" than in the Experienced Investigators (EXP) group. Dr. Lauer concludes that "this provides important evidence that funding of more early career investigators could help enhance the diversity of the NIH workforce."

## **7. Open Mike: RCDeCade - A case Study to Show NIH Support Trends in an Emerging Scientific Field**

In an Open Mike [blog post](#), NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Mike Lauer, MD, discusses [the algorithm](#) used by the Research, Condition, and Disease Classification (RCDC) system to classify types of biomedical research that do not fit neatly into the existing RCDC categories. Dr. Lauer used advances in gene editing as an example, explaining that "the RCDC thesaurus [can be used] to develop an unofficial category definition and retroactively apply it to NIH grant applications." In this way, the RCDC thesaurus "can be used as a resource to assess research measures, such as applications, funding, patents, and publications."

## **8. NIH Soliciting Feedback on the BRAIN Initiative – due November 15**

The 10-year Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative is now nearing the halfway point, transitioning from its first stage of developing tools for research to its second stage of using those tools to "make fundamental discoveries about how brain circuits work and what goes wrong in disease." The NIH is [requesting information](#) to "help inform their discussions of the BRAIN Initiative's progress and potential updates to the plan

moving forward." Responses are due November 15, 2018, and must be submitted electronically using the [web-based form](#) at or via email to [BRAINFeedback@nih.gov](mailto:BRAINFeedback@nih.gov) with "BRAIN RFI" in the subject line.

### **9. Senate NIH Caucus – Ask Senators to Join!**

The Senate NIH Caucus co-chaired by Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) currently has 20 members. During August recess, grassroots advocates will have the perfect opportunity to ask their senators to join the NIH Caucus (see attached NIH Caucus flyer for the list of members). The Caucus promotes the need for sustained, predictable investment in biomedical research funded by the National Institutes of Health and the importance of treating and curing disease, securing our nation's global competitiveness, protecting us from bioterrorism, and boosting the economy.

### **Upcoming Hill Briefings and Events**

### **10. NCATS Workshop on Gene Therapy Approaches for Rare Diseases – August 20-21**

To help facilitate discussion on gene-based therapies among academic, government and industry researchers, the NIH's National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) and the Food and Drug Administration will co-host a [workshop](#), "The Growing Promise of Gene Therapy Approaches to Rare Diseases", August 20-21, 2018. The goals of this two-day workshop include reviewing the state of current gene therapy approaches, identifying challenges and strategies, and discussing how to accelerate gene therapy. The workshop will take place on the NIH Main Campus, Masur Auditorium, Building 10, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20892

### **11. NIH Council of Councils Meeting – September 7**

Through a Federal Register [notice](#), the NIH announced a meeting of the Council of Councils, scheduled for September 7. Agenda items include announcements and updates; Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO); All of Us Program Update; NIH Update; Common Fund Program – Stimulating Peripheral Activity to Address Conditions; and Workshop Report on Contributions of Social and Behavioral Research in Addressing the Opioid Crisis. The meeting will take place at NIH campus, 9000 Rockville Pike, Building 60/Cloisters, Lecture Hall/Chapel, Bethesda, MD 20892.

### **12. NIH Workshop on Single IRB Resource and Infrastructure Development – September 12**

The NIH will be holding a [public workshop](#) on "successful strategies and lessons learned for modifying and enhancing institutional IRB infrastructure for single IRB review of multi-site studies" on September 12 in Rockville, MD. The seven awardees of the NIH-funded [administrative supplements](#) to develop applicable approaches to single IRB review of multi-site studies will present their strategies at the workshop. The meeting is free and will be webcast, but seating is limited and registration is required.

### **13. Rally for Medical Research – September 12-13**

Join a broad coalition of stakeholders representing millions of patients and other advocates from the medical research advocacy community on September 12-13, 2018, 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 see attached flyer or visit the [event website](#) for more information and to register.

#### **14. AEVR Hill Briefing on Age-Related Macular Degeneration – September 27**

Please join the Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR) for a Hill briefing titled, “Understanding the ‘Dry’ Form of Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) To Develop Effective Treatments.” The event will take place September 27 from 12-1:15pm in 2060 Rayburn House Office Building. Please RSVP to [dinabeau@aol.com](mailto:dinabeau@aol.com) and see the attached flyer for additional information.

#### **15. AEVR 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception – September 27**

Please join AEVR for its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and poster session, including 21 Emerging Vision Scientists in the U.S. The reception will be held on September 27 from 5:30-7:30pm in the Rayburn House Foyer. Please RSVP to [dinabeau@aol.com](mailto:dinabeau@aol.com) and see the attached flyer for additional details.

#### **16. Call for Golden Goose Award Nominations**

The Golden Goose Award team is accepting nominations for the 2018 year. The Golden Goose Awards honor federally funded research that may be odd, obscure, or serendipitous but ends up having a major impact on society. To submit a nomination, [follow this link](#), or visit [goldengooseaward.org](http://goldengooseaward.org) and click on “nominate” in the top right corner. If submitting a nomination, be prepared to talk about who you are nominating, what unexpected impact the research has had, and which U.S. federal agency funded the work. Nominations are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year.

#### **17. Learn Serve Lead – November 2-6, 2018**

Learn Serve Lead 2018 - the AAMC Annual Meeting is open for registration. The November 2-6 event takes place in Austin, Texas and will draw 4500-plus attendees including a wide range of stakeholders. In addition to [four plenary sessions](#) including Grit author and researcher Angela Duckworth, PhD, and civil and women’s rights leader Anita Hill, JD, there are more than 130 concurrent sessions. Some of the slated sessions include:

- Improving Population Health Through Learner-Engaged Research
- Rightsizing Research Infrastructure
- Achieving Health Equity through Research: Innovations From NIMHD-Funded Science
- Unhealthy Politics: The Battle over Evidence-Based Medicine

[Discounted registration](#) is available through August 31.

### **Job Postings**

#### **FASEB Seeks Science Policy Analyst**

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) is hiring a [Science Policy Analyst](#) to develop policy positions related to promoting the interests of investigators in the biological and biomedical sciences. The individual will write position statements, meeting summaries, and reports and serve as a liaison to FASEB Science Policy Subcommittees and

task forces, in addition to monitoring the Federal Register and attending federal agency meetings. The position is full time, includes benefits, and is located at FASEB headquarters in Bethesda, MD. PhD preferred. Interested applicants can [apply online](#).

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).