Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

September 27, 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:

**American Academy of Neurology @AANMember – Sept. 23**

In FY2016, Congress gave @NIH its first significant budget increase in 12 years. Thanks to advocates like @RallyforNIH & the AAN, the @NIH budget has increased nearly 43% since. We urge Congress to continue investing in neurologic research and #FundNIH, #AANadvocacy #RallyMedRes

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**House-Approved CR with Debt Ceiling Hike Faces Opposition from Senate Republicans**

The House of Representatives passed a continuing resolution (CR), H.R. 5305, on Sept. 21 by a party-line vote of 220-211, just over a week before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30. The bill would extend current government funding temporarily through Dec. 3 to avoid a government shutdown and suspend the debt ceiling until Dec. 16, 2022, to avoid defaulting on the federal debt. The Senate is expected to take a procedural vote on the House-passed measure on Sept. 27, but Senate Republicans have stated that they will not support a CR that contains language to suspend the debt limit.

Following House passage of its CR, Sen. Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) released text of S. 2789, a CR to fund the government until Dec. 3 that does not include language to suspend the debt limit. If the House-passed measure does not garner at least 60 votes in the Senate, both chambers will likely consider a clean CR without debt limit language.

Both the House-passed CR and Senate Republican proposal include language allowing the NIH to provide no-cost extensions to specific multiyear grants set to expire on Sept. 30 that were negatively impacted by the pandemic. The funds, available to grants obligated through FY 2016, would be extended through FY 2022.

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**President Biden Announces Members of PCAST**
President Biden announced the 30 members of the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) on Sept. 22. PCAST is an external advisory committee charged with providing policy recommendations to the president in the issues of science, technology, and innovation. According to the press release, “This PCAST reflects the President’s commitment to build an Administration that truly looks like America: for the first time ever, women make up half of PCAST, and people of color and immigrants make up more than one-third of PCAST. Its diversity will help the council bring to bear a wide range of perspectives to address the nation’s most pressing opportunities and challenges, so that science, technology, and engineering benefits all Americans.” PCAST will be co-chaired by OSTP Director Eric Lander, PhD, Linus Pauling Professor of Chemical Engineering, Bioengineering, and Biochemistry at the California Institute of Technology Frances Arnold, PhD, and Vice President for Research and E. A. Griswold Professor of Geophysics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Maria Zuber, PhD. Drs. Arnold and Zuber are the first women to serve as PCAST co-chairs.

Open Mike: Reminder of COVID-19-Related Flexibilities for NIH Grants
NIH Director of Extramural Research Michael Lauer, MD, authored a Sept. 23 Open Mike blog post to reiterate the existing flexibilities NIH is utilizing in relation to COVID-19 impacts on NIH-funded research. The post outlined flexibilities in the categories of application and review; extension of funded projects; extensions of eligibility for early career scientists; extensions of reporting timelines; and costs. The post also cited the pandemic’s impacts to the research community and referenced a compilation of resources created by the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges).

Upcoming Events

NEW RFP: Microgrants Available for Student Policy Groups – Oct. 12
Research!America recently launched their 2021-2022 Civic Engagement Microgrant Program which provides funding for student- and postdoc-led civic engagement projects. The funding is intended for early career researchers who want to design and execute nonpartisan civic engagement activities and elevate the importance of scientific research, technological innovation and public health. Programs the students design should encourage dialogue between young scientists and local community and/or government leaders about the roles science and research play in issues important to their communities. Groups are also encouraged, but not required. Participation in this program affords early career researchers the opportunity to build transferable skills and gain relevant experience for careers in and outside of academia. The application deadline is October 12, 2021.

NEW Congressional Briefing: Myopia: A Public Health Crisis – Oct. 20
Myopia, or nearsightedness, is one of several refractive errors that occur when the eye cannot clearly focus images from the outside world. Myopia affects 30% of the United States population and 28% of the world’s population and is expected to reach 50% by year 2050. Studies estimate that the global impact of uncorrected myopia results in a $244 billion annual loss of productivity. The Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
(AEVR) is co-sponsoring a briefing on October 20 at 12 - 1pm EST in which speakers will address myopia clinical care and research. View the briefing flyer for additional information and register here.

**NEW** NIH Virtual Seminar on Program Funding and Grants Administration – Nov. 1-4
The NIH is hosting a virtual regional seminar on program funding and grants administration from November 1-4. The event website includes a detailed agenda with keynote speakers and concurrent sessions. Registration is free and available on the event website. Additional background information is available on the Sept. 24 Open Mike blog post.

Help End the HIV Epidemic: Clinical Fellowship Opportunity – November 8
The HIV Medicine Association and IDSA Foundation are accepting applications for the 2022–2023 training year. The fellowship program supports up to two physicians who are not trained in infectious diseases to pursue one year of HIV clinical training under the mentorship of an HIVMA member at clinical sites serving medically underserved populations.

The award includes a stipend set according to the PGY-4 salary level at the training institution, funds to cover the fringe benefits provided by the sponsoring organization and an additional $5,000 to support educational opportunities or offset administrative costs. Physicians whose communities are underrepresented in medicine or who are interested in working in the Southeastern United States are strongly encouraged to apply. Program and application requirements are on the HIVMA website, including recommended competencies for HIV clinical fellows. Email HIVMA staff with questions or for more information. Applications due by Nov. 8.

**NEW** Congressional Briefing: Speaking with Keratoconus Patients About Research and Treatments - Nov. 10
The Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR) is joining with the National Keratoconus Foundation (NKCF) to recognize World Keratoconus Day 2021. Keratoconus (KC) is an eye condition in which the normally round, dome-shaped cornea—the transparent front of the eye—becomes weak and irregular, resulting in vision distortion, double or blurry vision, and light sensitivity. Researchers believe that certain individuals have a genetic predisposition to develop it, and a 2021 study from Australia suggests prevalence of 1.2% of the population, meaning it affects the lives of more than 3 million Americans. Speakers Christopher Rapuano, MD (Wills Eye Hospital) and Christine Sindt, OD, FAAO (University of Iowa) will address how they speak with newly diagnosed KC patients about research and treatment options. The briefing will take place on Nov. 10 from 12-1pm EST. View the briefing flyer for additional information and RSVP to Dina Beaumont at dinabeau@aol.com

Requests for Public Comment
NIH Seeks Input on New Resource for Developing Consent Language for Future Use of Data and Biospecimens – Sept. 29

The NIH is requesting information from stakeholders on the utility and useability 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. To ensure consideration, comments must be received no later than September 29, 2021. Questions may be sent to SciencePolicy@mail.nih.gov.

OSTP and NSF Seek Input on Nationwide AI Research Resource Implementation Plan – Oct. 1

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Science Foundation are looking for your input to shape the work of the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource (NAIRR) Task Force. This Task Force is taking on a critically important initiative – building an implementation plan for a national infrastructure that would democratize access to artificial intelligence (AI) research and development (R&D). The Task Force will provide recommendations for establishing and sustaining the NAIRR, including technical capabilities, governance, administration, and assessment, as well as requirements for security, privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. The Task Force will submit two reports to Congress presenting a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan: an interim report in May 2022 and final report in November 2022.

Please submit responses to the Request for Information before the comment period closes on October 1, 2021.

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

NEW NIBIB Seeks Scientific Review Officer
The NIH’s National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Biotechnology (NIBIB) Office of Scientific Review (OSR) is recruiting one Scientific Review Officer with a background in bioengineering (tissue, organ, synthetic biology, point of care technologies). The OSR is responsible for managing the peer review of a wide range of applications and programs including special NIBIB, Common fund, and BRAIN initiatives. The OSR also participates in the review of the joint NSF-NIH programs like Cyber Physical Systems and National Robotic Initiative.

To be considered for the position, you will need to apply to the Global Recruitment announcement at USA Jobs. The global announcement opened on Monday, September 20, 2021 and will close on Wednesday, September 29, 2021. You can view the position opening here. For additional information about this position, please contact Manana Sukhareva sukharem@mail.nih.gov

Academic Public Health Leadership Positions
The Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) has posted three senior level job announcements: Chief External Relations And Advocacy Officer; Director, Advocacy and Federal Affairs; and Chief Academic Officer. The Chief External Relations and Advocacy Officer will lead the integration and advancement of the ASPPH’s advocacy, strategic communications, and fundraising and development efforts. The Chief also will lead the ASPPH’s efforts to promote the use of research and science to advance public policy. The Director, Advocacy and Federal Affairs, will lead the ASPPH’s efforts to affect regulatory, legislative, and other public policy issues. The individual also is charged with keeping the leaders of ASPPH member schools and programs informed on the status of policy deliberations and legislative and regulatory actions. The Chief Academic Officer will lead programs, initiatives, and activities that support education, accreditation, practice, professional development, workforce development, and data. All three positions are based in ASPPH’s Washington, DC office. Applications will be accepted through October 15, 2021.

Science Policy Analyst, American Physiological Society
The American Physiological Society (APS) is seeking a Science Policy Analyst that will report to the Director of Science Policy and Government Relations to help fulfill APS’s advocacy role by tracking legislative and regulatory issues related to federal funding for biomedical research, the use of animals in biomedical research, biomedical research
workforce, and other science policy issues, helping develop and implement advocacy strategies in support of Society positions on research funding, animal research, and other science policy issues, supporting the American Physiological Society’s Science Policy (SP) and Animal Care and Experimentation (ACE) Committees, representing APS in meetings with external scientific and advocacy organizations and coalitions, and represent the department in internal APS activities and projects, writing about science policy for the Society’s website, news magazine and social media and contribute to other communications efforts. To learn more about APS, please visit their website. Please e-mail your cover letter and resume to apply for the position.

The Director, Government Affairs and Policy, The ALS Association

The Director, Government Affairs reports to the Vice President, Public Policy and works as part of a team with the Associate Director of Grassroots Advocacy and the Public Policy Manager. The Director, Government Affairs designs and directs all aspects of government affairs including identifying legislative and regulatory opportunities, securing appropriations, and advancing legislation and policies through nonpartisan advocacy with members of Congress, congressional committees, and relevant federal agencies. The Director, Government Affairs is also responsible for collaborating with the Associate Director of Grassroots Advocacy to mobilize Association chapters and volunteers to achieve results and represents the association in national coalitions focused on the needs of people living with ALS. Bachelor’s degree with 4-8 years of work experience in healthcare government affairs and advocacy or the equivalent combination of education and work experience. Click here to apply.

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.

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.