



## THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

### Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up

September 8, 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 Universities @AAUniversities – September 8**

A new robotic system designed by [@JohnsHopkins](#) researchers may help hospitals preserve protective gear, limit staff exposure to [#COVID19](#), and provide more time for clinical work.

#### **Senate Expected to Vote on COVID-19 Relief**

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) announced in a [September 8 press statement](#) that the Senate would vote on a new targeted COVID-19 relief package as early as this week. The proposal is expected to focus on “healthcare, education and economic issues,” according to the statement. The full text of the proposal has not been released, and it is unclear if the proposal will include funds for the NIH.

#### **Pelosi, Mnuchin Agree to Clean CR**

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin have agreed in principle on a “clean” continuing resolution (CR) to avoid a government shutdown at the end of the fiscal year on September 30. According to a [September 3 report in Politico](#), the CR would not include additional COVID-19 relief funds. The duration of the CR is still undecided, with previous reports indicating Republicans favored a shorter CR in comparison to their Democratic colleagues.

#### **NIH Director to Testify Before Senate HELP Committee**

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, will testify before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee in a hearing titled, [“Vaccines: Saving Lives, Ensuring Confidence, and Protecting Public Health.”](#) The hearing will take place on September 9 at 10am EST. Dr. Collins will be joined by Surgeon General of the United States VADM Jerome Adams, MD, MPH.

#### **NIH Leadership: Why Testing is the Key to Getting Back to Normal**

Leaders from several NIH Institutes and Centers [co-authored a September 4 blog post](#) outlining the importance of widespread SARS-CoV-2 testing. The authors highlight several

reasons that widespread testing is beneficial including testing saves lives; testing can be easy and fast; and testing matters most in the communities most affected by COVID-19.

### **NIH Announces Support for New COVID-19 Tests**

The NIH announced \$129.3 million in funding to nine companies to scale-up and manufacture new SARS-CoV-2 tests as part of the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) Initiative in a [September 2 news release](#). The newest awards will fund tests including portable point-of-care tests and high-throughput tests with a 24-hour turnaround time. “Diagnostic testing is a critical component of the nation’s strategy to meet the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said NIH Director Francis Collins MD, PhD. “The RADx initiative has moved swiftly to speed innovation and later-stage development in the biomedical technology sector. The results thus far have been outstanding,” he added.

### **NIH-Funded COVID-19 Vaccine Trial Enters Phase 3**

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) is providing financial support to drug maker AstraZeneca to commence a Phase 3 clinical trial of a COVID-19 vaccine candidate. Reported in an [August 31 news release](#), the Phase 3 trial, part of Operation Warp Speed, will enroll approximately 30,000 adult volunteers across 80 sites in the United States. NIAID Director Anthony Fauci, MD, shared optimism about the trial, noting, “Positive results from preclinical research led by NIH scientists supported the rapid development of this vaccine candidate, which has also showed promise in early-stage clinical trials.”

## **Upcoming Events**

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### **Research!America's National Health Research Forum - September 8-10**

Registration is now open for Research!America’s 2020 Virtual National Health Research Forum - three days of powerful conversations that take an unvarnished look at the impact of COVID-19. The event Straight Talk: Securing a Science Strong Future will take place from September 8-10, 2020. The full agenda is [available here](#). For more information and to register, [click here](#).

### **AIRI to Hold 2020 Annual Meeting, Present Fauci with 2020 Public Service Award**

The Association of Independent Research Institutes ([AIRI](#)) 2020 Annual Meeting will be held virtually on September 14-16 with an exciting lineup of general session speakers, including [AIRI Public Service Award recipient](#), Dr. Anthony Fauci. AIRI was pleased to recognize Dr. Fauci with the Association’s highest honor this past April for his unwavering commitment to biomedical research and his leadership during the coronavirus pandemic. The Annual Meeting will also feature a keynote presentation from [Ms. Esther Krofah](#), the Executive Director of [FasterCures](#) at the Milken Institute, who will discuss the biomedical innovation ecosystem and reflect on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Please register for the annual meeting [here](#).

### **Virtual Rally for Medical Research – September 16-17**

The Rally for Medical Research is held every September and includes more than 350 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 for the virtual reception, please visit [rallyformedicalresearch.org](http://rallyformedicalresearch.org).

### **Global Liver Institute's Advanced Advocacy Academy – October 26-30**

The Global Liver Institute's fourth annual [Advanced Advocacy Academy \(A3\)](#) will take place worldwide on October 26-30. This year's virtual event will offer liver patients, caregivers, and professionals the opportunity to learn from experts in the fields of drug development, clinical trials, state and federal legislation, media and communications, and liver health and disease. Live discussions with faculty members will enhance individual learning, foster engagement, and promote important conversations. Self-paced lessons can be customized to fit each attendee's personal learning style and schedule. Anyone impacted by liver disease and passionate about liver advocacy should [apply for A3 2020](#) online by October 1. For more information, see the [attached flyer](#) or contact [a3@globalliver.org](mailto:a3@globalliver.org).

### **Virtual NIH Regional Seminar – October 27-30**

NIH is making plans for a [virtual regional seminar](#) on program funding and grants administration this fall. The event will take place from October 27-30. The agenda is currently under development, but a sample of potential sessions can be [found here](#). Registration details will be on the [Regional Seminars website](#) when available.

## Requests for Public Comment

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### **\*NEW\* NLM Seeks Feedback on 10 Year Strategic Plan – October 19**

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) issued a [request for information \(RFI\)](#) to solicit public comments and assist NLM in its efforts to implement the NLM Strategic Plan 2017-2027. Specifically, NLM seeks feedback “on major opportunities or challenges relevant to the NLM mission that have arisen or become more important in the last five years and that have implications for the future of NLM in its capacity both as an institution conducting and supporting research and as a national library providing biomedical information products, services, training, capacity-building, and other resources to the world.” Comments are due no later than October 19 via [webform](#).

### **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) published a [July 2019 request for information](#) on the institute's strategic planning 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](#).

## 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)

***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).*