



THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ad Hoc Group Weekly COVID-19 Follow Up

September 17, 2020

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be publishing an additional weekly update focused on COVID-19 to highlight related NIH actions and guidance as well as activities from the Ad Hoc Group community and general updates. As always, please forward any relevant items to Christa Wagner (chwagner@aamc.org) for inclusion in the publication!

Congressional and NIH News

House Working Through CR Negotiation, Rules Committee Scheduled to Meet

The House of Representatives are working toward a self-imposed noon deadline on Friday, September 18, to finalize a draft continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government into the new fiscal year. According to a *CQ News* update ([subscription required](#)), disagreements remain on provisions to be considered for a “clean” CR in the midst of a pandemic, as well as the duration of the CR. Reports indicate that House appropriators are awaiting feedback on a draft from Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), who separately told reporters that a December end-date for the CR is “nonnegotiable.”

In anticipation of a finalized draft, the [House Rules Committee](#) is scheduled to meet on Monday, September 21, at 1:00 pm to review the CR in preparation for floor consideration.

Senate Science Committee Advances RISE Act

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation advanced the Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act (S. 4286) by voice vote in a [September 16 executive session](#). The approved [amendment in the nature of a substitute](#) maintained the authorization of \$10 billion to NIH to provide supplemental funding to extend research awards disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research has endorsed the RISE Act.

NIAID Director to Testify on Federal COVID-19 Response

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Director [Anthony Fauci, MD, is scheduled to testify](#) on September 23 at 10am before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee on the federal response to COVID-19. Expected to join Dr. Fauci are leaders from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, and Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Health.

NIH Funds Community Engagement Research in Areas Hardest Hit by COVID-19

[A September 16 NIH News Release](#) announced a \$12 billion NIH award for outreach and engagement efforts in ethnic and racial minority communities disproportionately affected by the coronavirus in 11 states. The award will support research as part of the NIH Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities. CEAL is an NIH-wide effort led by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). “Building on the strength of local organizations, as well as our long-standing community-engaged research efforts, will help us communicate effectively to address disparities and support the proven resilience within communities,” said NIMHD Director Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, M.D. “This work will help ensure people get accurate and trustworthy information about the virus, how to reduce its spread, and how to protect themselves and their families.”

Substance Use Disorders Linked to COVID-19 Susceptibility

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Director Nora Volkow, MD, co-authored a study showing that individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) are more susceptible to COVID-19 and subsequent complications, according to a [September 14 NIH News Release](#). “The lungs and cardiovascular system are often compromised in people with SUD, which may partially explain their heightened susceptibility to COVID-19,” said Dr. Volkow. “Another contributing factor is the marginalization of people with addiction, which makes it harder for them to access health care services. It is incumbent upon clinicians to meet the unique challenges of caring for this vulnerable population, just as they would any other high-risk group.”

Upcoming Events

AEVR to Host Virtual Events for International AMD Awareness Week and Emerging Vision Scientists Day on Capitol Hill – September 23

The Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR) invites you to [two virtual events](#) associated with International Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) Awareness Week 2020 and AEVR’s Sixth Annual Emerging Vision Scientists Day on Capitol Hill.

A [congressional briefing](#), “Artificial Intelligence in Retinal Diseases—Focus on Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Diabetic Retinopathy (DR),” will take place September 23, from 12:00 -1:15 pm EST.

Secondly, 22 early-stage vision scientists will engage in [a conversation](#): “The Impact of COVID-19 Lab Closures on the Next Generation of Vision Scientists,” on September 23, from 1:30 - 2:00 pm EST.

Please RSVP to Dina Beaumont at 202-407-8325 or dinabeau@aol.com.

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@globaliver.org.

Virtual NIH Regional Seminar – October 27-30

The NIH is hosting a [virtual regional seminar](#) on program funding and grants administration from October 27-30. The event website includes a [detailed agenda](#) with keynote speakers and concurrent sessions. [Registration](#) is free and available on the event website.

NExTRAC Meeting – November 9-10

On November 9-10, 2020, NIH will be hosting a virtual meeting of the Novel and Exceptional Technology and Research Advisory Committee ([NExTRAC](#)). The NExTRAC provides recommendations to the NIH Director and serves as a public forum for the discussion of the scientific, safety, and ethical issues associated with emerging biotechnologies. More information about the meeting will be posted, as it becomes available, to the [NExTRAC page](#) of the [OSP Website](#).

Ad Hoc Group Member Resources

UMR Unprecedented Impact Fact Sheet: Progress on Hold

United for Medical Research (UMR) [released a profile](#) of University of Pennsylvania researcher Ariana Chao, PhD, the most recent in a series of fact sheets to examine the unprecedented impact that COVID-19 is having on biomedical research. From a laser-like focus by researchers, medical professionals and life sciences and biopharmaceutical companies worldwide to understand, mitigate, treat and eradicate the pandemic, to massive disruptions to ongoing research in all fields that is jeopardizing important work, stalling life-saving clinical trials and upending the career paths of many graduate students and early career scientists, COVID-19 is touching all aspects of our biomedical research enterprise.

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.

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

Job Postings

Epilepsy Foundation Seeks to Fill Positions on Its Research Team

Senior Director, Innovation, Research & New Therapies, whose primary responsibilities include: directing the Epilepsy Foundation's Innovation and Entrepreneurship programs, working with the CMIO in setting the objectives and key results for the Research & New Therapies (R&NT) staff and assists in budget preparations and quarterly monitoring for the R&NT team and providing supervisory and mentoring support to R&NT staff, as needed. [Click here to see the full job posting and apply.](#)

Research Program Manager, whose primary responsibilities include: Coordinating the development and delivery of the Epilepsy Digital Engagement Navigator (EDEN); developing engagement strategies, and work with our platform partner to ensure data is entered in the platform in an interpretable manner under the direction of the Director of Innovation and the CMIO; working with research clinical coordinator in the Human Epilepsy Project 2 study; assisting with analysis of research data sets by pulling and analyze various query requests from research data sets existing within the Foundation; and maintaining the web informational research tools such as the pipeline tracker. [Click here to see the full job posting and apply.](#)

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: 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 or Tannaz Rasouli at trasouli@aamc.org.*