



THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ad Hoc Group Weekly COVID-19 Follow Up

October 8, 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

Negotiations Stall on Comprehensive COVID-19 Relief Package

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin have discussed the possibility of a stand-alone relief package for airlines, according to [Roll Call on October 7](#). The report of a more narrowed focus to COVID-19 relief negotiations follows the president's October 6 tweet that negotiations on a comprehensive COVID-19 relief package would be put on hold. However White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows reportedly shared with Fox News that the White House would be prepared to agree to as much as \$1.7 trillion in total COVID-19 relief.

NIH Grantee Wins Nobel Prize for Discovery of CRISPR/Cas9

NIH grantee Jennifer Doudna, PhD, of the University of California, Berkeley, and Emmanuelle Charpentier, PhD, of the Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology, will be awarded the [2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry](#) "for the development of a method for genome editing," known as CRISPR/Cas9. According to Claes Gustafsson, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, "There is enormous power in this genetic tool, which affects us all. It has not only revolutionised basic science, but also resulted in innovative crops and will lead to ground-breaking new medical treatments." [STAT News](#) on October 7 reviewed the story of how the basic science discovery of CRISPR led to a Nobel (subscription required).

Director's Blog: Discussing the Long Arc of Discovery with NIH's Newest Nobelist

In an [October 8 Director's Blog](#), NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, interviewed NIH intramural researcher Harvey Alter, MD, who is sharing the 2020 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his efforts to identify the hepatitis C virus. Their conversation focused on the "long arc of discovery," through basic, translational, and clinical research to identify the virus before developing treatments and a potential cure for hepatitis C.

NIH Announces Third Round of Awards for COVID-19 Testing Technologies

NIH's RADx Initiative on October 6 [announced funding for six new COVID-19 testing technologies](#), totaling nearly \$100 million to develop point-of-care and other novel testing approaches. These new technologies are expected to add up to 500,000 tests per day by the end of 2020, and up to 1 million per day by early 2021. "The technologies include an antigen test that provides results in 15 minutes, a viral RNA test deployed in mobile vans that can travel to COVID hotspots and tests that require only saliva, nasal swabs or blood from a finger prick," noted RADx Tech lead Bruce Tromberg, PhD, director of the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB).

***Open Mike*: Surveys to Identify Impacts of COVID-19 on Extramural Research**

NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Michael Lauer, MD, encouraged NIH grantees to participate in upcoming surveys to better understand the impact of COVID-19 to extramural researchers and their institutions in an [October 5 Open Mike blog post](#). The surveys will be open until the end of October, and the confidential, de-identified survey responses will be analyzed and reported in aggregate to NIH leadership.

Upcoming Events

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.

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

Ad Hoc Group, Coalition for Health Funding Host Virtual Briefings with IC Directors

The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research has teamed up with the Coalition for Health Funding to host a series of virtual briefings with directors of NIH's institutes and centers to discuss how research to date and ongoing work can inform our response to the coronavirus, as well as the impact the pandemic is having on existing research across the agency's broad portfolio. Recordings of the first two briefings with [National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities \(NIMHD\)](#) Director Eliseo Pérez-Stable and [National Institute on Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#) Director Joshua Gordon, MD, PhD are available.

Friends of NIMH Coalition to Launch

A [Friends of NIMH](#) coalition is forming for the first time. Interested Ad Hoc Group members are invited to join using the [form](#). Questions? Contact [Pat Kobor](#) of American Psychological Association (APA) or [Juliane Baron](#) of Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences (FABBS).

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.*