Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up – November 5, 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:

Senator Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) @RoyBlunt
"We've worked to restore regular order for appropriations. The Senate passed the majority of appropriations bills by the beginning of August, the first time this has happened since 2000."

1. **Op-Ed: Bipartisanship in Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations**

Representative Steve Womack (R-Ark.) authored a Nov. 1 op-ed in *The Hill* highlighting the bipartisan efforts of the 16-member Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform. The committee was commissioned through the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-123), and Rep. Womack notes, has been working to"[produce] recommendations that meaningfully improve the congressional budget and appropriations process." He adds that the committee has found "value in compromise and collaboration and believe[s] that no matter who holds a majority in either Chamber, our budgetary framework should encourage, if not ensure our success." The Committee may release its legislative proposal as early as the week of Nov. 13, in advance of the Nov. 30 deadline.

2. **NIH Announces $220M in New BRAIN Initiative Funding**

The NIH Nov. 2 announced awarding of 200 new grants, totaling $220 million, for research to be conducted through the BRAIN Initiative. NIH noted that through additional funding made possible with the support of Congress "through both the regular appropriations process and [through] the 21st Century Cures Act, this brings the total 2018 support for the program to more than $400 million, which is 50 percent more than the amount spent last year." NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, added, "Brain diseases are some of the greatest mysteries in modern medicine. These projects will provide new tools and knowledge needed to discover answers for some of the most difficult neurological and neuropsychiatric disorders."

3. **NIH Director Sends Letter to Hill with MACH Trial Updates**

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD sent an Oct. 29 letter to Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) in response to the Senator's Sept. 27 letter regarding the Moderate Alcohol and Cardiovascular Health (MACH) Trial. Dr. Collins noted that the Office of Management Assessment (OMA) "completed its review and issued a report" to Human Resources and to NIAAA. Dr. Collins continued that disciplinary action was being taken, resulting in removal of three individuals who are "no longer employed at NIH or anywhere within [HHS]." Dr. Collins concluded with detailed actions NIH is undertaking to prevent similar policy violations from occurring again.

4. **NIH Updates Genomic Data Sharing Policy**

The NIH Nov. 1 published a notice in the federal register, announcing increased access to genomic summary results (GSR) for most NIH-sponsored research. This follows a 2016 NHGRI workshop and 2017 RFI on the topic. NHGRI Director Eric Green, MD, PhD, and Associate Director of Science Policy Carrie Wolinetz, PhD, co-authored a blog post on the update. The

authors note that "these [GSR] results come from analyzing pooled genomic data from multiple individuals together to generate a statistical result for the entire dataset. Such information can be a powerful tool for helping researchers determine which genomic variants potentially contribute to a disease or disorder."

5. White House OSTP Considers Changes to Open-Access Regulations

An Oct. 11 report in *Physics Today* shares updates on potential changes to open-access policies in the U.S. Publishers and advocates of open-access have been meeting with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) staff as the European Union moves closer to implementation of its new open-access policies in January 2020. Current U.S. regulations require that publications generated from federally-funded research "emerge from behind paywalls after an embargo period of up to one year." The NIH has maintained this one-year embargo policy since 2008.

Upcoming Hill Briefings and Events

6. NIH Webinar on Data Sharing Proposed Provisions – Nov. 7

The NIH will host a webinar for the Request for Information (RFI) on Proposed Provisions for a Draft NIH Data Management and Sharing Policy on Wednesday, Nov. 7 from 11:30am-1pm.

7. Research!America Post-Election Briefing – Nov. 8

Join Research!America for a briefing on Thursday, Nov. 8, 2018 from 10:00-11:30 a.m. ET as we look at the impact of mid-term election outcomes on the 116th Congress and implications for U.S. research and development (R&D). There is no fee to attend, but registration is required. Click here to see a detailed agenda and to register.

8. AAMC Webinar on NIH HEAL Initiative – Nov. 8

The NIH launched the Helping to End Addiction Long-term (HEAL) Initiative in April 2018 to accelerate scientific discovery to stem the opioid public health crisis. In this webinar, Director of the NINDS Walter J. Koroshetz, MD, will discuss the HEAL Initiative's priorities in pain management research with AAMC Chief Scientific Officer Ross McKinney, MD. Topics will include the progress made in understanding chronic pain, the partnerships established with industry to develop a therapy pipeline, and the new initiatives and upcoming funding opportunities in pain management research. The webinar will take place Nov. 8 from 3-4pm; click here to register and learn more.

9. NASEM: Meeting on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Academia – Nov. 9

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) will convene leaders, including "academic leaders, Title IX and diversity officers, ombudsmen, researchers in sexual harassment, and leaders from professional societies, foundations, and federal agencies, to discuss strategies and share promising practices" to discuss sexual harassment in academia. The meeting will be held Nov. 9, 2018, from 9:00am – 5:00pm at the National Academies in Washington DC and will focus on developing strategies on how to prevent sexual harassment in academia.

10. NIH ACD Meeting – Dec. 13-14

The NIH Advisory Council to the Director (ACD) will hold a public meeting Dec. 13 from 8:30am-5:30pm and Dec. 14 from 9am – 12pm at the NIH. Details are available through a Federal Register notice, and will become available on the NIH ACD website. Agenda items include the NIH Director's report, and ACD Working Group reports.

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.