Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
November 9, 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:

**Duke Health Government Relations @DukeGovRel – October 28**

Do you know why skeletons are so calm? Because nothing gets under their skin! Ha! Speaking of skin, have you checked out the great research happening at @DukeDermatology through basic, translational & clinical research? [https://dermatology.duke.edu/research](https://dermatology.duke.edu/research) #NC01 #NC04 #fundNIH @DukeMedSchool

**Senate to Release FY 2021 Spending Bills**

The Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to release all 12 fiscal year (FY) 2021 spending bills on November 10, according to media outlets (see *BGOV*, *CQ*, subscriptions required). Both House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) have stated that passing an FY 2021 omnibus appropriations bill is a priority during the lame-duck session. The current continuing resolution is set to expire on December 11.

**President-Elect Biden Releases Administration Priorities, Names COVID-19 Task Force**

The Biden-Harris transition on November 9 announced the 13 public health and scientific experts who will serve on the transition COVID-19 advisory board. “The advisory board will help shape my approach to managing the surge in reported infections; ensuring vaccines are safe, effective, and distributed efficiently, equitably, and free; and protecting at-risk populations,” stated President-elect Biden. The transition separately announced its plan to beat COVID-19, committing to listening to science, ensuring public health decisions are informed by public health professionals, and promoting trust, transparency, common purpose, and accountability in the government.

**Pelosi Officially Seeks Another Term as Speaker of the House**

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) officially announced her intention to seek another term as Speaker in November 5 letters sent to House Democrats, according to *Politico.* “I
am writing to request your support to be re-elected as Speaker. I do so with utmost respect for the diverse viewpoints in our Democratic Caucus, the gravity of this role the urgency of the challenges ahead,” Pelosi wrote. House leadership elections are slated to take place on November 18-19.

**Director’s Blog: Face Coverings Could Save 130,000 American Lives from COVID-19 by March**

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, discussed the importance of mask wearing to prevent the spread of COVID-19, especially as winter approaches, in a November 3 blog post. Dr. Collins reviewed a recent publication in Nature Medicine that modeled COVID-19 mortality rates based on several mask adherence scenarios. “If most Americans pulled together to do the right thing and wore a mask in public, this simple, selfless act would save more than 130,000 lives in the next few months alone. If mask-wearers increased to just 85%, the model predicts it would save about 96,000 lives across the country,” Collins wrote.

**Under the Poliscope: NExTRAC: Considerations for Gene Drives Research and an Emerging Biotechnology Framework**

NIH Associate Director for Science Policy Carrie Wolinetz, PhD, authored a November 9 Under the Poliscope blog post on the upcoming Novel and Exceptional Technology & Research Advisory Committee (NExTRAC) public meeting, taking place on November 9-10. Participants plan to address the first two committee charges: considering the safety and responsible use of gene drives in biomedical research and establishing a framework to guide NExTRAC in future deliberations of emerging biotechnologies. The committee will also consider a draft report from the Working Group to Establish a NExTRAC Framework, describing the working group’s current thinking on identification of emerging technologies or areas of science and a deliberative process and prompts for discussing and evaluating such technologies.

**CLS Releases NIH Recommendations for Next Administration**

The Coalition for the Life Science (CLS) published Beyond 2020: A Vision and Pathway for NIH,” a report including recommendations for the Biden Administration to “further enhance the world’s premier biomedical research and health agency.” The report includes guiding principles for advancing discovery, recommendations for presidential actions in the first 100 days, and longer-term recommendations for the NIH Director including in the themes of research, training and workforce, administration, operations and policy, and appointment of the NIH director.

**Upcoming Events**

**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 NEExTRAC page of the OSP Website.

**NIH Council of Councils Meeting – November 13**

The NIH Council of Councils will meet on Friday, November 13, from 2-3pm for a presentation and discussion of the draft NIH-Wide Strategic Plan (2021-2025). The virtual meeting will be webcast.

**March of Dimes Briefing on Maternal and Infant Health – November 17**

March of Dimes invites you to join "Making the Grade on Maternal and Infant Health: 2020 March of Dimes Report Card Virtual Briefing," on Tuesday, November 17 from 10:00am—11:30am. The briefing will explore a comprehensive view on the current state of maternal and infant health. The Report Card has new and exciting features, including key data on infant and maternal mortality, and disparity ratio data to delve into the causes and possible policy solutions to solve the maternal and infant health crisis. Register here—spaces are filling quickly! For questions about the briefing please contact Venicia Gray at: vgray@marchofdimes.org.

**AEVR Briefing on Thyroid Eye Disease – November 19**

Please join the Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR) as it continues its series of educational briefings on November 19 at 12:00pm with a virtual briefing, "Thyroid Eye Disease: What Have We Learned Through Research?" Please see attached flyer for additional information and register here to receive information for joining the webinar.

**Apply for HIV Clinical Training Opportunities – January 19, 2021**

The HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) Foundation are accepting applications for the 2021 HIV Clinical Fellowship Program. For the first time, the program is supporting one year of HIV clinical training for full or half-time effort awards to allow greater flexibility for physicians to train in community-based settings. The award supports a stipend of $33,000 for half-time training or $65,000 for full-time, plus funding to cover fringe benefits. Physicians whose communities are underrepresented in medicine or who 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 HIVMA Clinical Fellows. The deadline to apply is Jan. 19, 2021. For more information, please email HIVMA.

**SOBC Capstone Conference – February 22-23**

This capstone research conference will celebrate ten years of the NIH Science of Behavior Change (SOBC) Common Fund Program. The goal of the SOBC program is to advance behavior change research through a focus on mechanisms of change and the integration of basic research with applied/interventional research. The capstone conference will highlight innovative examples of behavior change research consistent with SOBC principles, from use-inspired basic research to mechanisms-focused intervention science. The capstone conference on February 22-23 will be virtual, open to the public,
recorded, archived, and proceedings summarized in a publicly accessible report. The agenda, speaker information, and a link to registration will be available on this website in the coming months.

Requests for Public Comment

NIH Seeks Feedback on NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for COVID-19 Research

NIH released an October 28 Request for Information (RFI) to solicit feedback on the NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for COVID-19 Research, released in July. The plan outlines how NIH is implementing five priorities, guided by three crosscutting strategies to improve basic understanding of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19, and to develop the necessary tools and approaches to better prevent, diagnose, and treat COVID-19. Responses are due December 7, 2020.

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 Research Program Manager

The primary responsibilities of the Research Program Manager 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.
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.