Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
November 16, 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 – November 12
A large study @WUSTL exploring possible genetic influences on cannabis use disorder has identified two regions in our DNA that appear to contribute to one's risk of becoming dependent on marijuana.

Deals on FY21 Spending, COVID-19 Funding by End of Year Unlikely
Officials on Capitol Hill and legislative experts expect another continuing resolution (CR) through the early spring with the possibility of adding a small COVID-19 relief package in year-end negotiations, as reported November 16 in CQ (subscription required). Despite bipartisan, bicameral interest in finalizing all 12 FY 2021 spending bills, the short timeline to the December 11 expiration of the current CR and ongoing differences on COVID-19 relief are stalling progress. Additional uncertainty comes from whether President Trump would sign a final FY 2021 omnibus spending package.

House to Hold Leadership Elections Week of November 16
Members of the House of Representatives are slated to hold leadership elections this week, beginning with House Republicans on November 17 where it is expected that Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) will maintain his role as Minority Leader. House Democrats will hold their elections over November 18-19. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) is also expected to retain her position as Speaker of the House. BGOV (subscription required) details potential changes in other House Democrat leadership positions, including Assistant Speaker, Caucus Vice-Chair, and Democratic Caucus Representative. House Committee chairmanship elections will take place the week of November 30

Promising Interim Results from Clinical Trial of NIH-Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine
The NIH summarized promising Phase 3 clinical trials results from an investigational COVID-19 vaccine (mRNA-1273) co-developed by the National Institute of Allergy and
Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and Moderna, Inc. in a November 16 news release. The analysis of 95 symptomatic COVID-19 cases translated to a 94.5% efficacy in the well-tolerated vaccine, suggesting that the vaccine is safe and effective at preventing COVID-19 symptoms in adults.

**Open Mike: NIH Introduces New Early Stage Investigator Research Grant Program**

The NIH has introduced the Stephen I. Katz Early Stage Investigator Research Grant Program, named after the former director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases from 1995 until his passing in 2018. The new grant program, building on NIH’s Next Generation Researchers Initiative, aims to support young investigators if they are proposing research in a new direction than past work, for which they have no preliminary data. NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Michael Lauer, MD, further described the new award program in a November 9 Open Mike blog post.

**STAT: Cancer clinical trial enrollment has plummeted. Will patients come back amid Covid-19?**

Survey results from cancer patients investigating willingness to participate in clinical trials once COVID-19-related restrictions are lifted were recently published in JAMA Oncology and covered by STAT on November 12. “The nationwide survey of 933 patients, conducted between May and June 2020, revealed that nearly 1 in 5 patients were hesitant to participate [in clinical trials], mostly from the fear of being exposed to Covid-19,” noted the review.

**Upcoming Events**

**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.

**NEW** R!A Virtual Discussion on RNAi for Rare Diseases – November 19

Please join Research!America as they host a virtual panel discussion, “From Nobel Winning Science to Next Generation Treatment: Tracing the Path of a Rare Disease Breakthrough using RNAi." Participants will explore the impact of RNAi technology in addressing unmet medical needs and demonstrate the symbiotic roles of the public and private sectors. The discussion will take place on November 19 at 11am EST. Please register here.

**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.](#)

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**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.