Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
November 30, 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:

Lewis Katz School of Medicine @templemedschool – November 30
#TempleMed researchers make another #HIV breakthrough, using #CRISPR gene editing technology to eliminate SIV, the primate equivalent of HIV, in a large animal model, a major milestone in the path to a potential cure. #TempleMedResearch

Appropriators Agree to Allocations for FY 2021 Spending Bills
House and Senate appropriators agreed to allocations for the FY 2021 spending bills on November 24, dividing the $1.4 trillion in discretionary spending among the 12 spending bills. As noted in Roll Call, details including individual allocations for each spending bill are not usually revealed before legislative text is prepared. The bipartisan agreement to the 302(b) allocations allows lawmakers to draft an end of year omnibus spending bill, with less than two weeks until expiration of the current continuing resolution on December 11.

House Democrats Prepare to Select Appropriations Committee Chair
House Democrats will vote the week of November 30 on the chair of the Appropriations Committee, with the new appointee replacing current Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) upon her retirement at the end of this Congress. Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) is reported to have a slight advantage over Reps. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), according to Roll Call. All three members have chaired individual subcommittees in the 116th Congress, with Rep. DeLauro chairing the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies subcommittee, which oversees NIH spending.

Biden Names Nominee for OMB
President-elect Joe Biden announced Neera Tanden to be the nominee as Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The November 30 press release describes Tanden as a “leading architect and advocate of policies designed to support working families, foster broad-based economic growth, and curb inequality.” She currently serves as President & CEO of the Center for American Progress.

Fourth Iteration of COVID-19 Treatment Trial Underway
In a November 25 news release, NIH announced patient enrollment for a fourth Adaptive COVID-19 Treatment Trial (ACTT-4) to investigate specific therapies for hospitalized COVID-19 patients. The latest trial, supported in part by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), will enroll up to 1,500 patients in an international clinical trial to compare the therapeutic remdesivir in two separate combination therapies for patients requiring supplemental oxygen. Previous ACTT trials indicate that remdesivir shortened time to recovery. Enrollment for the trial is expected in three to four months.

Community Sign On Letter on Finalizing FY 2021 and Emergency Funds
The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) invite you to join a science and research stakeholder letter to Congress, urging swift action to complete work on the fiscal year (FY) 2021 appropriations bills. The letter also calls on Congress to consider emergency supplemental funding for research relief due to the extraordinary disruptions to research labs in the wake of COVID-19. The purpose of the letter is to bring the science and research stakeholder community together to speak with one voice on behalf of all federal R&D, including NIH, and to advocate for timely, meaningful increases for federal science agencies. To view the letter online and sign on, please go here: https://forms.gle/1n7P861vEpKuJUVb9.

Upcoming Events

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.

Apply for Medical Student HIV, Infectious Diseases Research Grants – February 5
The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) Foundation and HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) seek applications for the G.E.R.M (Grants for Emerging Researchers/Clinicians Mentorship) Program for the 2021-2022 cycle. The program provides grants to medical students to support a mentored clinical learning and/or research project for up to a year, on infectious diseases and HIV related topics under the mentorship of an IDSA or HIVMA member. Applicants must be medical students (first, second or third year) from an accredited allopathic or osteopathic medical school in the U.S. Application information is available from the IDSA Foundation website. Awardees receive a $4,000 stipend to complete their project. The deadline to apply is February 5, 2021. Please email HIVMA staff with questions.

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

AAMC Seeks Senior Science Policy Analyst

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) seeks a Sr. Science Policy Specialist, to work closely with leadership in the Scientific Affairs team to provide up-to-date information on policy developments affecting biomedical research at member medical schools and teaching hospitals, prepare presentations and communications, and assist in
the development of positions and responses to federal requests, especially on National Institutes of Health (NIH) matters. Key issue areas include medical/clinical research infrastructure, training and workforce development and on the issues promoting diversity and combatting sexual harassment in the STEMM workforce. Please visit the full job post for more information and to apply.

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.