Ad Hoc Group Weekly COVID-19 Follow Up
December 4, 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

House Leader Pushes Weekend Deadline on FY 2021 Negotiations

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) is pushing House and Senate leaders to complete negotiations on outstanding issues in FY 2021 spending bills by midnight Saturday in order to meet the Dec. 11 expiration of the current continuing resolution, according to CQ (subscription required). Both Hoyer and Senate Appropriations Chair Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) describe the proposed timeline as “ambitious,” with Shelby anticipating a short-term CR will be necessary to avoid a government shutdown and complete work on an omnibus spending package.

Bipartisan Lawmakers Introduce $900 Billion COVID-19 Relief Proposal

A bipartisan group of lawmakers on Dec. 1 introduced a $908 billion COVID-19 stimulus proposal, described as a targeted, emergency relief framework, which does not include additional funds to support research relief to federal research agencies. The proposal has been endorsed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and President-elect Biden as a starting point for additional COVID-19 relief. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) told reporters that any COVID-19 relief will likely ride with any end-of-year appropriations package.

House Members Choose New Committee Chairs for 117th Congress

House Labor-HHS Subcommittee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) was elected to be the next chair of the full House Appropriations Committee in a 148-79 vote on Dec. 3, as reported in Roll Call. “It is a unique time. We are in the middle of a health and economic crisis that must be addressed, communities of color face systemic racism, and we welcome a President with a mandate for change,” said DeLauro in a press release. DeLauro is expected to maintain her role as chair of the Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee. A full list of Democratic committee chairs is available here.

House Republicans also elected ranking members to House committees for the 117th Congress. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) was selected to serve as the lead Republican on the Energy and Commerce Committee, which includes the NIH under its
House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy released the full list of ranking members for the new Congress.

**House Releases 2021 Legislative Calendar**

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) released the House 2021 legislative calendar on Dec. 2. “When the new Congress convenes in January, we will be meeting in the middle of a raging pandemic. To that end, next year’s schedule is designed to ensure that the House will be productive and get its work done while keeping Members, staff, and House employees safe,” noted Hoyer, in describing the addition of Committee work days. The 117th Congress is expected to convene for the first time on January 3, 2021.

**Biden Asks Fauci to Serve as COVID Adviser**

President-elect Biden shared that he has asked National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci, MD, to serve as his chief medical adviser in a December 3 interview with CNN and reported in NPR. Biden reported that he also asked Fauci to join the new administration’s COVID-19 team.

**Upcoming Events**

**NIH ACD Meeting – December 10-11**

The NIH Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) will virtually meet in a public meeting on December 10-11. The meeting is expected to cover many topics including various COVID-19 updates on December 10 followed by updates from ACD working groups and a discussion on NIH’s strategic plan on December 11.

**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.

Ad Hoc Group Community Resources

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.

NEW American Lung Association Town Hall on COVID-19 Disparities

The American Lung Association is hosting a Town Hall Series on COVID-19. The next event, Disparities in COVID-19: Unjust, Unacceptable & Correctable, will take place on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 from 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. EST. The time is now to address health inequities. Differences in health status, along with barriers to accessing healthcare, contribute to racial and ethnic minority groups experiencing increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19. Please join the conversation as top experts discuss how the pandemic highlights many long-standing disparities in health outcomes and offer up actionable steps that would protect all Americans where they live, work and play. Please register here.

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.