

Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up –December 10, 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:

University of Michigan Research [@UMichResearch](#)

“#DYK that [@UMich](#) research projects supported by [@NIH](#) allow researchers to explore important societal issues ranging from income dynamics to cancer? <http://myumi.ch/aAezW>“

1. President Signs Two Week CR, Preventing Partial Government Shutdown

President Trump Dec. 7 signed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to prevent a partial government shutdown and provide appropriations at the fiscal year (FY) 2018 level through Dec. 21 for the seven unfunded appropriations bills. The agencies funded by the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill (Labor-HHS), including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), are not affected by this CR. Congress will need to finalize the remaining seven FY 2019 funding bills or pass another CR by the new deadline of Dec. 21.

2. NIH Seeks Comments on Proposals for Reducing Regulatory Burden in Animal Research

The NIH Dec. 7 issued a [request for information](#) on a new report “Reducing Administrative Burden for Researchers: Animal Care and Use in Research”, also published in the [Federal Register](#). Responding to a directive in the 21st Century Cures Act, the committee report provides a side-by-side commentary on various proposals to address redundant or ineffective regulation. References to a [joint report](#) co-authored by the AAMC, FASEB, COGR, and NABR are cited in the NIH report. NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Mike Lauer, MD, explains the background and purpose of the RFI in an *Open Mike* [blog post](#). The deadline to provide comments is February 5, 2019.

3. New NIH Financial Conflict of Interest Training Module Available

The NIH Dec. 3 [announced](#) that it is providing a new financial conflict of interest [training module](#) to help investigators satisfy requirements under the [2011 Public Health Service Financial Conflicts of Interest \(FCOI\) regulations](#). As a reminder, per the [NIH Grants Policy Statement](#), institutions must require investigators complete FCOI training “prior to engaging in NIH-supported research and at least every four years,” and immediately under certain designated circumstances.

4. Oversight and Government Reform Hearing on Alternatives to Fetal Tissue Research – Dec. 13

The House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittees on Government Operations and Healthcare, Benefits, and Administrative Rules [will hold](#) a joint hearing titled “Exploring Alternatives to Fetal Tissue Research.” The hearing will be held in 2154 Rayburn House Office Building beginning at 10 a.m.

5. Science: NCI Operating Budget Cut by 5%

Jocelyn Kaiser [Dec. 7 reports](#) in *Science* that NCI Director Ned Sharpless, MD, is implementing a 5% cut to the institute's operating budget. Despite a 5% budget increase in FY2019, Ms. Kaiser reports that "NCI's funds are being whittled away by rising federal salaries, transfers to other parts of NIH and its parent department, larger grants, and a mandate to raise training stipends." In addition, NCI grant applications have increased dramatically since 2014, but NCI grant success rates remain at 12%. "To meet its obligations and prop up success rates, NCI is imposing a 5% cut to 2018 spending levels across all divisions, offices, and centers...which should free up \$56 million."

6. NIH Researcher Presents Promising Data for Sickle Cell Disease Therapy

The NIH Dec. 4 issued a [news release](#) describing promising results from a gene therapy trial for severe sickle cell disease. "Preliminary findings suggest that the approach has an acceptable level of safety and might help patients consistently produce normal red blood cells instead of the sickle-shaped ones that mark this painful, life-threatening disease. The experimental treatment involves removing hematopoietic stem cells from the patients' bone marrow or blood and adding a therapeutic beta globin gene, which is defective in people with sickle cell disease. The cells are then returned to the patients, leading to the production of anti-sickling hemoglobin." The results were presented by John Tisdale, MD, of the NHLBI Intramural Research Program at the American Society of Hematology annual meeting.

7. NIH-funded Tissue Chips Sent to Space

Tissue chips that model the immune system [Dec. 5](#) were sent into space to study immune aging as part of a research program supported by NCATS and the International Space Station U.S. National Laboratory. NIH-funded researchers from University of California, San Francisco, developed a tissue chip, designed to function like human organs, to model the immune system. NCATS Director Christopher P. Austin, MD, noted that the "NCATS' research carried on today's launch will not only contribute valuable knowledge on the aging process but also may reveal new approaches to ameliorating the effects of aging."

8. *Open Mike*: Changes to the R15 AREA Program and Introducing the R15 REAP Program

A Dec. 3 *Open Mike* [blog post](#) by NIGMS Director John Lorsch, PhD, NIGMS Program Director Alexandra Ainsztein, PhD, and NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Mike Lauerm MD, explains a restructuring of NIH's R15 Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA). This award traditionally supports undergraduate and graduate students at institutions that receive little NIH funding. Under the transition, the R15 AREA award will only support undergraduate students, and a new award, the R15 Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP), will support "graduate schools of arts and sciences and health professional schools that grant baccalaureate or advanced degrees."

9. OSTP Releases Report on STEM Education

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy's (OSTP) Committee on Stem Education Dec. 4 released a [report](#) "Charting a Course for Success: America's Strategy for STEM Education." The report "presents the Federal Government's five-year strategic plan for STEM education, based on a vision for a future where all Americans will have lifelong access to high-quality STEM education and the United States will be the global leader in STEM literacy, innovation, and employment." To achieve this vision, the report sets three goals: 1) build strong

foundations for STEM, 2) increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM, and 3) prepare the STEM Workforce for the Future.

Upcoming Hill Briefings and Events

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.

Job Postings

NIH Office of Legislative Policy and Analysis Seeks Legislative Analysts

The NIH Office of Legislative Policy and Analysis (OLPA) seeks several candidates for Legislative Analyst positions. If selected for a Legislative Analyst position, you will be responsible for serving as the NIH legislative liaison concerning legislative policy and program issues that may affect NIH programs and activities. Some of your major duties and responsibilities include: serving as principal legislative staff for the Office of the Director and the NIH on all matters of a congressional or legislative nature; providing top-ranking officials within NIH, HHS, the White House, and Congress timely information, advice, or data related to NIH research programs or legislative activity related to those programs; analyzing pending legislation or legislative proposals, identifying and developing critical analysis for NIH officials on areas of concern and/or emerging issues that may affect NIH research programs; and preparing position statements on pending legislation; drafting testimony or statements for the NIH Director or other senior officials; and developing special staff documents or other papers concerning NIH interests, activities, and relationships. Visit the [job posting on USAJobs](#) for additional details and to apply.

PCORI Seeks Associate Director, Public Policy

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute seeks an Association Director, Public Policy. Position responsibilities include: supporting the Director for Public Policy and Government Relations, Chief Engagement and Dissemination Officer, and the PCORI Board of Governors and executives in representing PCORI with Congress, including members, committee staff and legislative staff; support the development and implementation of PCORI's strategic plan related to reauthorization; and more. Please visit the [job posting](#) to apply.

National MS Society Seeks Manager, Government Relations

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society mobilizes people and resources to drive research for a cure and to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS. To fulfill this mission, the Society funds cutting-edge research, drives change through advocacy, facilitates professional education, collaborates with MS organizations around the world, and provides programs and services designed to help people with MS and their families move their lives forward. We partner with volunteers to accomplish our work. Staff members engage volunteers through effective and timely communications, facilitating meaningful opportunities, and continually seeking and providing feedback for reciprocal growth and learning.

This position will provide advocacy and policy support across all of the Society's activism. The position will directly lobby Congress, as well as implement advocacy and lobbying strategies and tactics at the federal and state levels. The position will be responsible for public policy and

legislative research and analysis to help determine, assess and manage the Society's federal, state and local policy priorities. Additionally, the position will engage with advocacy staff and volunteers across the country. For more information and to apply, click [here](#).

University of Florida Seeks Assistant Director of Federal Relations

The University of Florida Seeks an Assistant Director of Federal Relations for the Washington, D.C. office. Essential job functions include: manage and execute the government relations program for a portfolio of the University's federal interests; anticipate, monitor and analyze federal policy, funding developments, legislation and regulations, and provide regular reporting to internal stakeholders; build and maintain relationships with key legislative branch and executive branch officials, their staff members, and higher education and other policy advocates and associations; and more. More details and application instructions are available on the [job posting site](#).

American Heart Association Seeks Government Relations Manager on Appropriations and Regulatory Affairs Manager

This [Government Relations Manager](#) represents the American Heart Association before Congress and the Executive Branch agencies on legislative and regulatory issues related to biomedical research heart disease and stroke prevention programs. Responsibilities include: developing and executing appropriations requests before the House and Senate Labor Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriation Subcommittees for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and for heart disease and stroke prevention programs administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This position is also responsible for developing knowledge and expertise (and when applicable, advocacy positions) related to all issues relevant to the research environment, among other roles.

Under the direction of the Vice President of Federal Advocacy, the [Regulatory Affairs Manager](#) would be responsible for monitoring, analyzing, and drafting responses to a prescribed set of federal regulatory and reimbursement-related issues that impact the association's public policy agenda. The primary focus of the AHA's regulatory work is with the Department of Health and Human Services and its key agencies: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Food and Drug Administration, and Health Resources and Services Administration. Major topics would include rules that impact ACA markets and patient protections, Medicare coverage determinations and Medicare payment rules, and FDA initiatives focused on drug/device development and safety.

Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation Seeks Policy and Advocacy Coordinator

The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation seeks a motivated individual to join a policy team committed to making a difference in the lives of people with paralysis and/or mobility impairments. The [Policy and Advocacy Coordinator role](#) will offer an opportunity to learn more about the issues and initiatives that the Reeve Foundation is working on to address the difficulties faced by people with paralysis and their families and help support and advance that work. The role will also offer an opportunity to oversee the Reeve Foundation's Regional Champions grassroots advocacy education program. To apply, please send resume along with cover letter by email to Felice Fullem at: ffullem@christopherreeve.org.

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.