Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up
December 21, 2020

The Ad Hoc Round Up will be on hiatus after today’s edition until January 4, 2021. Wishing you a happy and healthy start to 2021!

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:

Vanderbilt Government Relations @Vanderbilt_GR – December 17

Thank You, @SenAlexander, BA’62, for a career of public service to Tennessee and being a champion for investments in medical research, science and expanding educational opportunities.

Congress Agrees on COVID-19 Relief, Omnibus Votes Planned
Senate leaders announced on December 20 that a bipartisan agreement had been reached on a $900 billion year-end COVID-19 relief package, which leaders had previously announced would be tied to a $1.4 trillion year-end omnibus of FY 2021 spending bills. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer issued a press release outlining the coronavirus package, including additional funds to accelerate vaccine distribution. Congress passed and the president signed two short-term continuing resolutions, on December 18 and December 20, to extend government funding through December 21. Text of the omnibus and COVID-19 relief package are expected on December 21 in advance of the first votes in the House. Additional details on a possible timeline and contents of the relief package are covered in Politico.

House Democrats Select Key Committee Appointees for 117th Congress
The House Democratic Steering Committee nominated appointments to several key committees, including the Appropriations Committee, on December 17. New members of the House Appropriations Committee include Adriano Espaillat (D-N.Y.), Josh Harder (D-Calif.), Susie Lee (D-Nev.), David Trone (D-Md.), Lauren Underwood (D-Ill.), and Jennifer Wexton (D-Va.). Appointees to additional committees are listed in a press release from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

Statement from NIH and BARDA on the FDA Emergency Use Authorization of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine
A second coronavirus vaccine received emergency use authorization on December 18, which was co-developed between the NIH and biotechnology firm Moderna, Inc. In a December 18 news release, the NIH highlighted its “innovative and monumental partnership” between the federal government and industry. NIH Director Francis Collins noted, “To have not one but two safe and highly effective COVID-19 vaccines ready for deployment to the American public is truly a remarkable scientific achievement … The partnership to develop the mRNA-1273 vaccine is a prime example of the tremendous good that can be accomplished when the public and private sectors work together to address a serious public health problem.”

SARS-CoV-2 Antibodies Can Protect from Reinfection, NCI Study Suggests
A research study analyzing antibody testing results from more than 3 million individuals shows that those with previous COVID-19 “appear to have some degree of protection against being reinfected with the virus.” The update published in a December 21 blog post by National Cancer Institute (NCI) Director Norman “Ned” Sharpless, MD, highlights the efforts of NCI researchers to address COVID-19 with the more than $300 million NCI received in emergency supplemental funding earlier this year.

Science: Breakthrough of the Year
Science magazine highlighted COVID-19 vaccines as the 2020 Breakthrough of the Year in a December 17 news story. The article highlighted in detail the rapid timeline of under one year from SARS-CoV-2 sequencing to vaccine development, testing, and approval, including the use of novel vaccine technologies.

Open Mike: Case Study in Review Integrity: Sharing an Application Being Reviewed
NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Mike Lauer, MD, published the next blog post in the series of case studies in review integrity, focusing on sharing an application being reviewed. The December 18 post reiterates that sharing of grant applications is specifically prohibited in NIH peer review policies and describes a case based on a true story which resulted in the termination of the researcher’s NIH peer review service.

NIH OSP Publishes Year-End “‘Twas the Night Before Christmas”
NIH Acting Chief of Staff, Associate Director for Science Policy, and Director of the Office of Science Policy (OSP) Carrie Wolinetz, PhD, released her annual “‘Twas the Night Before Christmas” blog post on December 21. This yearly publication cleverly summarizes some key highlights from OSP’s work over the course of the year.

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](web), 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.

**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.

Combat COVID website including information for those who have never had COVID-19, have been infected, have recovered, and for health care providers.

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 combating sexual harassment in the STEMM workforce. Please visit the full job post for more information and to 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.