



The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research

Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Weekly Roundup

December 22, 2025

Please note that the Ad Hoc Weekly Roundup will be on hiatus until Congress returns from recess on Jan. 5.

NEWS

Appropriations Committee Chairs Agree on Bicameral FY 2026 Funding Toplines; Senate Delays Vote on Minibus to January

In a [Dec. 20 press release](#), House Appropriations Committee Chair Tom Cole (R-Okla.) announced a bicameral agreement with Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-Maine) on the remaining topline funding allocations for fiscal year (FY) 2026 appropriations. Chairman Cole said the agreement keeps the total allocation “below the funding level projected in the continuing resolution for FY26.”

On the evening of Dec. 18, the Senate was unable to reach agreement on a procedural vote to consider a five-bill minibus that includes the (FY) 2026 Labor–HHS–Education appropriations bill, which funds the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee in July. As the Jan. 30 funding deadline approaches, both the House and Senate are expected to take up FY 2026 appropriations when members return from recess.

STAT News, “NIH funding rates for early-career researchers plunged in 2025, new data show”

A [Dec. 18 STAT News article](#) describes a significant drop in funding success for early-career researchers during the 2025 fiscal year. According to the report, the success rate for early-stage investigators applying for major NIH research grants fell to 18.5% in 2025, down from 29.8% in 2023, based on agency figures shared at a recent NIH advisory council meeting. This represents an 11-percentage point decline in early-stage investigators.

Huffington Post, “At 44, I Received A Cancer Diagnosis I Never Saw Coming. Too Many Young People Will Get The Same One.”

A [Dec. 11 Huffington Post article](#) highlight the rising incidence of colorectal cancer among younger adults and the need for federal investment in cancer research. Patients like Graeme Demianyk, who is also the author of this article, describe the shock of the diagnosis: “Nothing prepares you for the moment you’re told you have cancer. My only symptom was blood in my stool. Easily ignored. But I’m forever glad I paid attention.” Diana Zepeda, another patient diagnosed at 33, added, “If I can just hold on long enough, I can live to see the cure.”

Experts say federal funding through the National Institutes of Health is essential to drive progress. Dr. John Marshall of Georgetown University Hospital noted, “The investment in federally funded research has been an incredible engine of innovation over the decades. The threat is all around us that we will come to a screeching halt.”

Inside Higher Ed, “Research Groups Oppose Capping NIH Funding of Publisher Fees”

A [Dec. 16 Inside Higher Ed article](#) highlighted how research and university advocacy groups urged the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to reconsider proposed caps on how much NIH grants can be used to pay publishers’ article

processing charges. The NIH had solicited feedback on its proposal and received nearly 900 public comments. Advocates contend that the caps, alongside other funding policy shifts at the agency, risk undermining scientific dissemination and strain already tight research budgets supported by NIH funding.

Reuters, “US NIH races to fill nearly half its top roles after wave of departures”

A [Dec. 17 Reuters article](#) says the NIH is moving quickly to fill nearly half of its senior leadership positions following a wave of departures across the agency. According to the article, NIH has posted openings for 11 institute and center director roles.

The report notes that the accelerated hiring timeline has raised concerns among some current and former NIH officials, who say searches for institute directors are typically lengthy and highly deliberative.

Health and Human Services officials told Reuters that interest in the positions is strong, and that application windows may be extended if needed. The leadership gaps span multiple research areas, and observers say the outcome of these searches could shape NIH’s scientific direction and funding strategy in the coming years.

NIH Director Discusses Nutrition Research with Tufts University Food is Medicine Institute

NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya, M.D., Ph.D. delivered the closing keynote at the [Dec. 11 Capitol Hill luncheon “Eating Ourselves Sick? Ultra-Processed Foods and U.S. Health Policy,”](#) presented by the Food is Medicine Institute at Tufts University and Food Tank. Bhattacharya outlined NIH’s role in supporting nutrition research, emphasizing the agency’s infrastructure to fund, review, and manage research that can inform food policy and regulation. He cited growth in NIH investments in food-as-medicine research, stating that direct funding

increased from \$5 million in 2021 to almost \$9.5 billion last year, with additional investigator-initiated projects across multiple NIH institutes. He also referenced coordination across NIH's 27 institutes and ongoing congressional consideration of expanded funding mechanisms, including potential centers of excellence, as part of NIH's broader approach to nutrition research.

Upcoming Events

Register for FASEB's Advocacy Town Hall Meetings

Join the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB)'s Advocacy Town Hall meetings — a recurring virtual space where researchers and advocates come together twice a month (first and third Tuesday from noon to 1:00 PM ET) to: receive updates from Capitol Hill and the latest science policy news from NIH, NSF, and other federal agencies; share experiences or express opinions on important science policy issues; contribute to grassroots mobilization efforts; and help share the future of the research community through continuous input.

The series consists of biweekly sessions on Tuesdays running from January through December 2026. The next date is Jan. 6. [Register here](#), and please complete all requested fields.

Request for Public Comment & Funding Opportunities

NIH Issues Request for Information on Draft Proposal Harmonizing Research Participant Data Policies

The NIH on Dec. 17 released a [request for information](#) on a proposed Controlled-Access Data Policy and revisions to the Genomic Data Sharing (GDS) Policy. The draft Controlled-Access Data Policy specifies which human participant data require controlled access, establishes criteria for assessing additional data types, and standardizes expectations across NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices. Proposed revisions to the GDS Policy aim to adapt

requirements and clarify data submission and consent procedures for human genomic data.

NIH invites stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed policies, including the identification of data requiring controlled access and revisions to genomic data sharing practices. The deadline to submit comments is March 4, 2026. Questions regarding the proposal may be directed to SciencePolicy@od.nih.gov.

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 Tannaz Rasouli at trasouli@aamc.org.*

Connect with the AAMC:



Join the [AAMC Communities Network](#)

[RECEIVE AAMC NEWSLETTERS](#)

This email was sent by:

AAMC

655 K Street NW, Ste 100, Washington, DC, 20001 US

[Privacy Statement](#)

[Unsubscribe from this list](#)

[Update Profile](#)

© 2025 AAMC