

October 19, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sleep Research Society

FR: Dale Dirks and Dane Christiansen

RE: Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Town Hall Meeting

On Tuesday, October 17th, the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research held a Town Hall to discuss a number of activities related to research, particularly funding, at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The meeting opened with an update on the state-of-play for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 from Tannaz Rasouli of the Association of American Medical Colleges. This update was followed by a report on FY 2019 activity from Jennifer Zeitzer of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology.

Updates on relevant policy proposals for FY 2018 included the following:

- Clinical Trials Definition: Mary Jo Hoeksema from the Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers and Paula Skedsvold from the Federation of Association in Behavioral and Brain Sciences gave an overview of the issue; a rule issued that expanded the definition of clinical trials to now include basic scientific studies is putting undue burden on basic scientists with no notice that their work would be included, requiring these scientists to go through extensive funding application procedures. The American Psychological Association is leading a multi-society letter on the issue advocating for exclusion of basic science from the definition of a clinical trial.
- Indirects/Facilities and Administrative Expenses: Jennifer Poulakidas from the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities noted that the President's FY 2018 budget request advocated for cutting "F&A" allowances (resources that academic researchers currently rely on to support their labs and work), but that the House and Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bills do not support these cuts. The Senate language includes a strong rebuke of the proposal, and will hopefully prevail in Conference. The House Labor-HHS-Education subcommittee is scheduled to hold a hearing entitled "The Role of Facilities and Administrative Costs in Supporting NIH-funded Research" on Tuesday, October 24th at 10:00 AM.

Finally, Laura Friedel and Alex Keenen, Majority Clerk and Minority Clerk for the Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Committee respectively, gave an update on what to expect from the Appropriations process moving forward. In sum, the process cannot move forward without a budget resolution with a larger allocation. Leadership is discussing this currently with the goal of having a deal in place before Thanksgiving. Following this, final appropriations will be pushed to the last minute with another Continuing Resolution likely, extending the deadline for finalizing appropriations closer to the end of the year (the current deadline is December 8th). Laura Friedel also noted that reorganization talks for NIH are expected to come up in discussions pertaining to FY 2019.

We will continue to keep you updated as this process moves forward.