



June 22, 2017

NIH Director Testifies at Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing

Dr. Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), testified about the proposed FY 2018 budget for the NIH at a [Senate Appropriations Committee hearing](#) this morning. Other witnesses included: Dr. Douglas Lowy, M.D., Acting Director of the National Cancer Institute; Dr. Gary Gibbons, M.D., Director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Dr. Anthony Fauci, M.D., Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; Dr. Richard Hodes, M.D., Director of the National Institute on Aging; Dr. Nora Volkow, M.D., Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse; and Dr. Joshua Gordon, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the National Institute of Mental Health.

The hearing was primarily focused on discussing treatments for various disease areas, such as Down syndrome, cystic fibrosis, Alzheimer's, sickle cell anemia, pediatric issues and auto-immune diseases. While NIH funding cuts in President Trump's budget proposal was a widely-discussed topic, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) specifically expressed concern to Dr. Collins about the effects of cutting grant funding for indirect costs from 28% to 10%. The Senator asked Collins what would happen to his intramural research program if funding for indirect costs was reduced to 10%. Collins responded by stating that the issue has attracted a lot of attention in the biomedical research community and that "indirect costs" is an "unfortunate term" because it is difficult to determine what those costs refer to. He also suggested that it would be difficult to imagine how a facility would be managed if funding for such costs were to be reduced.

He further stated about indirect costs: "We are looking at every possible way that we might be able to assist in this conversation by identifying areas in which various administrative burdens that we ask institutions to follow could be reduced, because maybe they're not as necessary as they are. So, we're looking at our current regulations, for instance, about conflict of interest, about animal care, about effort reporting. We might in that process be able to identify a way to reduce somewhat the burden, but frankly I don't think it would add up to an enormous difference in what we're currently asking our grantee institutions to do, and they are the ones who do the work. We depend on them."

According to Collins, indirect costs such as facilities, utilities, buildings, supply of light and water, operations of administrative services and animal care oversight are necessary to conduct research.

[Click here to view the full hearing](#). Discussion about indirect costs begins at the 49:30 mark. Please continue to watch your inbox for updates from NABR about the budget approval process for the NIH, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Delaware “Beagle Freedom” Bill Moves out of Senate Committee

The Delaware State Senate Committee on Health, Children and Social Services held a hearing yesterday afternoon and considered a bill that would require animal research institutions to work with third party adoption organizations to find homes for retired dogs and cats. The bill also purports to give institutions the option of placing animals in private homes through the institutions' own adoption programs; an option that already exists. [Senate Bill 101](#) passed out of the Committee and will be considered soon by the full Delaware State Senate. As reported in last week's *NABR Update*, S.B.101 is being promoted by the Beagle Freedom Project (BFP), an animal rights organization which claims its mission is to find homes for animals, yet which has also publicly stated it aims to end all animal research and testing. Delaware residents may voice opposition [by sending this pre-formatted letter to Senators](#). POLITICO recently [raised questions about the group](#).

This year alone, research animal adoption legislation has been introduced in [ten states](#), but so far has not become law in any of these states. However, [S.B.1884](#) in Illinois is awaiting the Governor's signature. If you'd like to register your concerns with the Illinois Governor, [you may do so here](#). For information and resources on research animal adoption legislation, [please see NABR's toolkit](#).

USDA Posts Spring AWA Inspection Reports

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has posted inspection reports from facility inspections conducted during the time period of April 22, 2017 through May 19, 2017. USDA removed [inspection reports](#) from its database in February in response to a legal case regarding the Horse Protection Act (HPA). USDA has been reposting the redacted documents throughout the past several weeks.

[According to a recent press release](#), USDA APHIS claims they will continue to repost redacted documents with an exception for inspection reports for regulated entities licensed or registered as individuals of homestead businesses, to protect personal information under the Privacy Act. Animal inventories for this batch of inspection reports is still being reviewed, and therefore the online postings do not yet contain animal inventories.

Furthermore, [the press release states](#): “We remain committed to ensuring the welfare of the animals we

regulate. Please know that we continue to carry out the critical, day-to-day work of ensuring the humane treatment of these vulnerable animals by conducting unannounced inspections, pre-compliance visits and other activities.”

Animal Rights Group Calls for Undercover Investigators

[Mercy for Animals \(MFA\)](#), an animal rights group that currently focuses its efforts on ending animal agriculture, has posted to its website a blog entitled [“So You Want to Work in Animal Rights... Here's How to Get Started.”](#) This blog shares suggestions for how young people can become involved in animal rights activism, and it includes a section encouraging activists to acquire jobs at farms and slaughterhouses as [“undercover investigators.”](#) This blog and recent PETA infiltrations at research facilities serve as a reminder about how important it is for animal research institutions to strengthen their hiring practices and conduct thorough background checks. If NABR members need to review tips included in our comprehensive Crisis Management Guide, [please click here: \(login required\)](#).

FASEB Hosts Workshop on Responsible Science Communication

Scientists, science reporters, advocates and stakeholders in biomedical research [are invited to view](#) a science communication workshop that was hosted by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) and the National Institute of General Medical Sciences today. The workshop, “Responsible Communication of Basic Biomedical Research: Enhancing Awareness and Avoiding Hype,” will soon be available to the public [via videocast](#) on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) website. The workshop focused on the public’s perception of research findings and how the biomedical research community can better communicate with the public. Erika Check Hayden, science journalist and director of the Science Communication Program at the University of California- Santa Cruz, delivered the keynote address. For the full agenda, [click here](#).

Sponsorship Opportunities Available for Golden Goose Awards

Each year, three research teams within the science community are awarded the prestigious [Golden Goose Award](#), which celebrates “breakthroughs in the development of life-saving medicines and treatments; game-changing social and behavioral insights; and major technological advances related to national security, energy, the environment, communications, and public health.” Recipients will be honored at an award ceremony this fall in Washington, D.C., in which Members of Congress will speak about the importance of federal funding for biomedical research.

[Sponsorship opportunities](#) for the Golden Goose Awards are available until September 6.