October 31, 2017

Advocacy News

Special Diabetes Program in Jeopardy; Urge Your Senator to Act Now

The reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program (SDP) has been a top priority for the Endocrine Society. As you know, the SDP is a critically important program that is comprised of two main parts: the Special Type 1 Program which funds NIH research and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) that provides diabetes education and prevention programs to at-risk American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Our members have met with Members of Congress and written and called key decision makers on Capitol Hill to advocate for the program. The Society also held a Congressional briefing with the support of Rep. Buddy Carter to raise the visibility of the program.

Despite considerable bi-partisan support, reauthorizing the SDP has been difficult and now the future of the program is in jeopardy. Funding for the Special Type 1 Program expired on October 1 and the SDPI will expire on December 31 if Congress fails to come to an agreement.

In the House, the Energy and Commerce Committee included the SDP as part of its Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) reauthorization package. However, the package uses Prevention and Public Health Fund (which supports other important programs through the CDC) to pay for it. The Society does not support using these funds to offset the cost of the SDP and has urged Representatives to find an alternative approach to funding the program. To make matters more complicated, the Senate version of the CHIP reauthorization package did not include the SDP. This makes using CHIP as a legislative vehicle highly problematic as both the House and Senate versions must be consistent in order to be signed into law.
The Senate is now considering the extension of a number of healthcare programs through a different legislative vehicle. However, in the most recent draft, the SDP was not included. We need your help to raise the profile of this critically important program. **Contact your Senators today** and tell them that the SDP must be included in any healthcare extension package and reauthorized immediately. The Senate is really key to continuing the SDP. Because of close voting margins, solution that can pass will have to be bipartisan. It is critical that Senators hear from constituents about including SDP now in order for it to be part of the Senate legislative package and influence the House of Representatives.

**European Parliament Rejects EDC Criteria**

On October 4 the European Parliament voted on and rejected proposed criteria that would have failed to identify endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) currently causing harm to public health.

The Society had opposed the proposed criteria and had argued the proposed criteria would not ensure a high level of health and environmental protection. Members of the Endocrine Society met with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and European Commission staff to explain our objections to the criteria, and how the criteria could be improved to better protect public health. Angel Nadal, PhD, Chair of the Society’s EDC Advisory Group, also delivered a presentation during an event in the European Parliament just days before the vote about how the Parliament can assess the criteria proposed by the Commission.

Although the adopted objection challenged the criteria on the basis that the European Commission exceeded its mandate, rather than the scientific flaws with the criteria, this still represents an important opportunity to continue to work with policymakers in the EU to incorporate the latest scientific principles in the next proposal. We welcome the vote by the Parliament and we look forward to developing better regulations by working with all the EU institutions.

**HHS Strategic Plan Comments Focus on Society Priorities**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released its **draft strategic plan** for 2018-2022. The plan articulates how HHS will achieve its mission through five strategic goals:

1. Reform, Strengthen, and Modernize the Nation's Health Care System
2. Protect the Health of Americans Where They Live, Learn, Work, and Play

3. Strengthen the Economic and Social Well-Being of Americans Across the Lifespan

4. Foster Sound, Sustained Advances in Sciences

5. Promote Effective and Efficient Management and Stewardship

Prior to finalizing the plan, which includes objectives and strategies for each goal, HHS solicited comments from stakeholders. The Society highlighted areas where our policy is consistent with HHS’ goals and identified objectives that are of concern. Specifically, our comments focused on increasing access to diabetes prevention services and access to care for people with chronic conditions, rising insulin prices, access to women’s health services including contraception, and workforce issues for endocrinologists in clinical practice and research.

Research News

NIH Clinical Trial Policy Updates

NIH Announces New Clinical Trial FOAs

On October 25, the NIH notified the biomedical research community of plans to issue parent R01 and R21 Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) for clinical trials. The new parent FOA would be consistent with the new definition for clinical trials as “a research study in which one or more human subjects are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions (which may include placebo or other control) to evaluate the effects of those interventions on health-related biomedical or behavioral outcomes.”

The parent FOAs will be issued in November, for applications on or after January 25, 2018. NIH Institutes and Centers may join the parent FOA, or will publish separate FOAs consistent with the new clinical trial definition. We encourage members to stay updated on the latest developments at the NIH Grants Guide.

Updated Guidance on Single IRB

On October 11, the NIH issued new guidance to the extramural research community regarding the implementation of the Final NIH Policy on the Use of a Single Institutional Review Board
(IRB) for Multi-Site Research. The guidance includes potential review options for meeting the policy and expectations for applications and proposals.

**FASEB Releases Report on Shared Research Resources**

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) released a new report entitled “Maximizing Shared Research Resources.” The report identifies the challenges encountered by providers and users of shared research resources such as core facilities, living collections, and national laboratories, and makes recommendations for improvement. The recommendations cover several areas, including:

- Recommendations to improve the funding and business operations of shared resource facilities;
- Recommendations to increase the discoverability and access of shared research resources; and
- Recommendations to better meet evolving research needs.

Endocrine Society members participated in the survey that informed the recommendations. To examine the survey results and the full report, we encourage you to visit the FASEB website.

For questions regarding articles listed in *Endocrine Insider* or information on advocacy and policy activities within the Endocrine Society, contact the Government & Public Affairs department:

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