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NIH Requests Patience from Challenge Grant Applicants

In a broadcast email, the NIH Office of Extramural Research informed the scientific community that the agency had received approximately 20,000 applications in response to the Challenge Grant RFA. Because of the large volume of applications and the use of Special Emphasis Panels rather than standing study sections, NIH anticipates that some applications may be moved between review groups, resulting in multiple email notifications to applicants. NIH requests patience during this process, asking investigators to hold any inquiries about internal assignment changes until after May 21. Furthermore, the announcement stated that CSR will not consider requests from applicants to have their applications assigned to a different Special Emphasis Panel.

Notifications are also generated when the application is assigned to a new Institute/Center. The automated messages will give contact information for the Division of Receipt and Referral, but questions about IC assignments should be directed to the assigned primary IC or to the IC that the investigator feels is more appropriate. IC contacts can be found on the IC-specific Challenge Grant Web sites:

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge_award/IC_ChallengeWebPage.htm.

The [OER](#) is to issue a press release later this week with further information.

Healthcare Stakeholders Offer Savings Goal; Baucus States No Permanent Pay Fix Expected in 2010

Earlier this week, a coalition of providers, hospitals, insurers and others met with the Obama Administration to outline its commitment to healthcare reform. The coalition was developed to demonstrate agreement among a wide group of stakeholders on areas of common interest in healthcare reform. The crux of the group's commitment is a promise to reduce the annual health care spending growth rate by 1.5 percentage points, creating a savings of approximately \$2 trillion during the next 10 years. This commitment comes on the heels of a statement made earlier this month by Karen Ignanni, president of America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), who invited additional regulation of the health insurance industry under the implementation of broad-based health reform.

Comprising many health groups, including AHIP, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, Advanced Medical Technology Association, American Hospital Association, American Medical Association (AMA), and Service Employees International Union, the coalition agrees on the need for health reform that provides coverage and high-quality, affordable healthcare for all Americans. The stakeholder group proposes savings through various means,

including medical liability reform, aligning quality and efficiency, reducing hospitalization, managing chronic disease, and other proposals. Details on these proposals have not yet been released. The Endocrine Society continues to work with the AMA and other specialty societies on areas of healthcare reform important to endocrinologists and their patients.

In other health reform news, Senator Baucus (D-MT) has stated that plans for reform likely will not include a permanent fix to the Medicare physician payment system, according to *CQ Today*. Physicians are slated to experience a 21% cut to reimbursement in 2010 under the current payment formula, the sustainable growth rate (SGR). Last week, Senator Baucus and Finance Committee Ranking Member Charles Grassley (R-IA) released a proposal for a short-term Medicare physician payment fix, in addition to other changes to the program. Under the Committee's plan, physicians would be eligible for new bonuses for providing higher-quality, lower-cost care. According to the Finance proposal, the SGR would be updated with a temporary payment fix in 2010 through 2012. Afterward, some scheduled payment reductions could be implemented, though no final proposal detailing the extent of these reductions is currently in place, and the payment options could change. The Finance Committee proposal states that in addition, other payment bonuses would be developed to offset some of the payment reductions caused by the SGR. The Endocrine Society continues to advocate for the repeal and replacement of the sustainable growth rate and will support policies that have a positive effect on the practice of endocrinology.

President's Budget Requests 1.46% Increase for NIH

President Obama released his fiscal year (FY) 2010 budget on Thursday, May 7. The budget gives a line-by-line funding recommendation for each item in the budget, answering many of the questions raised by the budget overview that was released in early March. According to the budget, the National Institutes of Health will receive \$30.75 billion in FY 2010, a \$442 million (1.46%) increase over the FY 2009 appropriation of \$30.31 billion. Additional information on the NIH budget can be found [here](#). The appropriations process will now begin with the markup of the individual appropriations bills in the subcommittees.

The funds allocated to the NIH through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 were not included in the base for purposes of determining the increase for FY 2010, though many in the scientific community had hoped they would be. With the minimal increase recommended by the President for FY 2010, the resulting low baseline sets the stage for potential problems in FY 2011 when the ARRA funds expire. The Endocrine Society and the larger scientific community are working to develop a strategy that leads to long-term sustainable increases that will build on the advances made under the ARRA. The Endocrine Society supports President Obama's campaign pledge to double the NIH budget over ten years and recommends that NIH receive an increase of at least seven percent in FY 2010 to prepare for the post-stimulus era and ensure the steady, sustainable growth necessary to complete the President's vision of doubling the investment in basic and clinical research.

The Endocrine Society will continue to update its members regarding the FY 2010 appropriations process through future alerts and *Endocrine Insider*. If you have questions about the appropriations process, please contact Stephanie Kutler, Director of Government Relations at the Society, at skutler@endo-society.org.

JCEM Research Featured on NBC's *The Today Show*

Research recently published in *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism (JCEM)* on male contraception was featured on NBC's *The Today Show* on May 5. The study, conducted by a team of scientists in China, showed that injectable testosterone may be an effective form of male contraception.

The show's Chief Medical Editor Dr. Nancy Snyderman reported the new findings during the first half hour of the program to its average daily audience of 5.5 million viewers. The coverage created an excellent opportunity to increase public knowledge of the field of endocrinology while reinforcing *JCEM's* status as a leading scientific journal.

In addition to *The Today Show* coverage, the research was also reported by *USA Today*, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *US News & World Report*, *Forbes*, *Globe and Mail*, ABC News and BBC News.

You can view *The Today Show* segment online at:

<http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/26184891/vp/30575880#30575880>.

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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