Research!America’s Post-Election Briefing November 15

How will research for health fit among the priorities of a new Administration and the next Congress?

Distinguished leaders in public policy, will discuss the outcome of the 2016 Election and implications for the research ecosystem and medical progress during a program at the American Association for the Advancement of Science on Tuesday, November 15, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. ET.

Federal funding for research and bold initiatives like the cancer moonshot, precision medicine, mental health and efforts to combat the opioid epidemic and other health threats will be among the topics for a panel discussion moderated by Lori Stokes, co-anchor, WABC-TV Eyewitness News.

Guest speaker John Zogby, the founder of the “Zogby Poll” and founder and Senior Partner of John Zogby Strategies, will share insights on the results of the presidential and congressional elections, a changing political landscape, and the potential impact on research advocacy.


Join us for Public Health Thank You Day on November 21

Public health professionals are on the frontlines keeping threats to the safety and security of Americans at bay but do they get the recognition they deserve? On the Monday before Thanksgiving, November 21, Research!America and leading public health organizations will honor public health professionals who safeguard Americans in various capacities from tracking and combating disease outbreaks, developing and distributing vaccines, preparing for natural disasters, keeping food and drinking water safe and the air clean.

“We are all vulnerable to communicable and non-communicable diseases, injuries, and other threats to our health, with the poorest among us disproportionately affected,” said Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health. “Today, we salute the millions of public health workers globally – in communities, clinics, research laboratories, health departments and many other settings who have dedicated their lives to helping all the world’s people achieve the highest attainable standard of health. Thank you for your service!”

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As a Chicago native, it gives me great pleasure to see that the Cubs won the World Series! As a career-long advocate for medical and health research, it will give me more pleasure to see two additional things happen this month: (1) election of candidates who are committed to driving medical progress by assuring the resources and policies that will advance both discovery and innovation; and (2) passage of 21st Century Cures legislation by both houses of Congress. We’re working hard to assure these ‘wins’ for patients and families and for our nation; we invite you to join us. Check out our website for ways to get involved.

Also this month, we will be calling attention to the heroes of public health, who work so hard and so effectively to make our world a healthier place. Public Health Thank You Day is celebrated on the Monday before Thanksgiving, November 21. It’s easy to participate: find more details in this newsletter and on our website. If enough of us take a minute to engage, we can increase awareness and ultimately support for public health in all its many forms: prevention, protection, mental health and health equity, increased attention to the social determinants of health. (If you’re not familiar with that term, it’s worthy of your attention – the so-called ‘upstream’ way to intervene for better health by improving conditions in places where people live, work and play – conditions such as unstable housing, low income, substandard education and other factors that affect our nation’s health and well-being.)
"Our public health workforce works day in and day out to protect and improve the health of others. Their work affects the lives of Americans in countless ways, from treating and preventing disease outbreaks, to preparing us for natural disasters, to ensuring everyone has access to quality and affordable care," said Georges Benjamin, M.D., executive director of the American Public Health Association (APHA). "Thanks to the efforts of these dedicated professionals, the U.S. is on its way to becoming the healthiest nation in one generation."

“We cannot just afford to focus on what happens in the intersection with the medical system. We really have to face up to the fact that we have more children living in poverty in this country than our peer nations, that children below age five have a higher chance to die in the U.S. than in our peer nations, and what does that mean for prevention? We really have to dedicate a significant amount of effort at identifying how we’re going to move upstream. And there is a movement in the country doing that in public health," says Hortensia Amaro, Ph.D., associate vice provost for community research initiatives and Dean’s Professor of Social Work and Preventive Medicine at the University of Southern California, and Research!America board member.

Research!America and PHTYD supporters are highlighting public health themes such as One Health, prevention, mental health and health disparities during the month of November. Visit www.publichealththankyouday.org to learn more and become a partner.

Federal Policy Update
When Congress comes back into session post-election on November 14, the House is in session for just six days and the Senate for eight days. Congress has three potential options to avoid a government shutdown by passing some sort of appropriations bill before the current continuing resolution (CR) expires on December 9. This legislation could take the form of: 1) a short-term CR that flat-funds government until February or March of next year; 2) a long-term CR that locks in status quo funding until Fiscal Year 2018 begins October 1, 2017; or a “Cromnibus”-a hybrid bill that provides FY17 budget increases for priorities like defense and NIH.

A bipartisan letter is being circulated in the House requesting that NIH receive no less than $34 billion in FY17. The letter is sponsored by Reps Suzan DelBene (D-WA), David McKinley (R-WV), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), and Peter King (R-NY) and has received signatures from 151 House members.

Additionally, advocates hope the “lame-duck” Congress will consider and pass a 21st Century Cures bill within their short working period. Legislative staff have said that the major policy provisions of the compromise Cures legislation have been finalized, and that key provisions, such as those improving the regulatory pathway for combination products and facilitating the use of existing data to speed the approval of products for unmet medical needs, remain intact. Key House and Senate legislators behind the Cures initiative have also indicated that funding for the Cancer Moonshot funding be an important component of the final Cures bill. Research!America is planning a #CuresNOW Day of Action on November 14 to encourage Congress to finish their work on this important legislative package before the end of the year.

It is also possible that the 114th Congress will attempt to pass landmark mental health legislation before adjourning in December. The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act (HR 2646) passed the House in July, and the Mental Health Reform Act (S.2680) passed the Senate HELP Committee in April. The House and Senate bills would help expand access to treatment.

Making the Case for Public Health Research
Personal stories that demonstrate the benefits of research are powerful examples to share with policymakers to increase support for public health, according to panelists at a town hall hosted by Research!America at the 2016 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting on October 31.

The session, moderated by Research!America president and CEO Mary Woolley, featured public health leaders and practitioners who shared their perspectives on ways to engage policymakers.

“Members of Congress want to hear personal heartfelt stories, preferably from their constituents,” said Robert Youle, former board chair, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. He added that public opinion surveys which show a majority of Americans strongly support greater investments in biomedical research are also continued on page 4
well-received by policymakers, especially those who understand the importance of federal support in advancing research.

Understanding the concerns of elected officials and the problems they are trying to solve is also critical in building relationships and finding common ground on issues that align with the goals of your organization. “I think that gets you much further down the road than just asking for what you need,” said Julie Gerberding, M.D., MPH, executive vice president for strategic communications, global public policy and population health, Merck; former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “That's the starting point for successful negotiations.” She also recommended working with the broader business community, particularly employees who care deeply about the capacity to find cures and solutions to chronic disease and have a stake in how health resources are being allocated.

Some panelists agreed that highlighting economic data linked to research can also be effective in conversations with policymakers. “The more [information] you can share about the economic benefits of public health research, the more they will feel motivated to act,” said Morgan McCloskey, MPH, project coordinator, health, wellness and fitness, Colorado State University. “This argument addresses an interest the policymaker has which is economic development in their constituency base,” added David Goff, Jr., M.D., Ph.D., Dean, Colorado School of Public Health. He also noted that the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health has released a report for the next presidential transition team that includes four broad goals: 1) ensure all Americans have the opportunity for a healthy life and invest in social determinants of health (education, production of healthy food, stable housing), and eliminate health inequities; 2) educate the next generation of skilled public health professionals; 3) increase investment in public health research; and 4) strengthen U.S. leadership and investment in global public health.

A More Scientific Union

Leaders in health and research shared their views on science during an election year in a ‘A More Scientific Union’ panel discussion on October 14, hosted by ScienceDebate.org, Research!America and other leading scientific organizations that aired on the Young Turks YouTube Network. Mary Woolley, president and CEO, Research!America, underscored the need for voters to query candidates about their plans, if elected, to support medical progress. When patients demand action, as evidenced by the polio and HIV/AIDS movements, she said, change happens. Harold Varmus, M.D., Nobel Laureate and Lewis Thomas University professor, Weill Cornell Medicine, said that strengthening investments for research will not only be beneficial for basic science but it will also help ensure progress on the cancer moonshot initiative. Understanding how future policymakers will support the scientific enterprise in the future, he said, is essential. Connecting scientific advancements to job creation could be part of the message to help drum up public support, noted Majora Carter, founder of Sustainable South Bronx.

Research!America board member Rush Holt, Ph.D., CEO, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) emphasized the need for Congress to move past past political ideologies and make decisions on issues such as public health based on scientific evidence. Divisive issues in science tend to dominate the public discourse, noted Andrew Revkin, New York Times environmental writer. Global warming, for example, fundamentally divides people but there is consensus among the general public on the importance of energy innovation and investments in renewables, said Revkin. The panelists agreed that more engagement between researchers and non-scientific audiences is critical. Scientists can also have a more active role in the political process by volunteering to be a scientific advisor for a campaign, said Woolley.

Federal Research Budget

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* indicates that program level is reported in this chart
** indicates that budget authority is reported in this chart

in the final sprint of this election season, presidential and congressional candidates are stepping up their outreach to voters but for the most part, issues related to research and innovation have not been part of the conversation. The final presidential debate on October 19 did not highlight topics relevant to medical progress or provide recommendations on how to combat health threats like cancer, Alzheimer’s, cardiovascular disease and infectious disease. Moderator Chris Wallace asked both candidates how they’d fix the sluggish economy and create jobs. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton discussed her plans to make the biggest investment in good paying jobs since World War II. She didn’t mention the role of research in job creation and economic growth but a plan on her website includes support for scientific research and technological innovation. Earlier in the week at a rally in New Hampshire, Republican candidate Donald Trump committed to tackling the opioid abuse problem, which would likely create more services and jobs throughout the country.

Research!America and partners launched a Campaign for Cures online ad campaign in October urging voters to ask their candidates for President and Congress their views on medical progress. The ads, which ran in key states and in the DC metro area, drove visitors to the Campaign for Cures website, featuring an interactive map with more than 500 candidate quotes on public and private sector medical innovation. View the quotes at www.campaignforcures.org.
Cancer Moonshot
Research!America president and CEO Mary Woolley penned a letter to the editor in Modern Healthcare calling for a robust funding commitment from Congress in FY17 to accelerate research to fight cancer and other diseases.

Health Research Should be a Priority
The Honorable Lou Sullivan, M.D., Research!America emeritus director, penned an op-ed for The Atlantic Journal Constitution, asking candidates for president and Congress to share their views on how they would prioritize medical research and innovation, and address the health challenges affecting minorities.

Support for 21st Century Cures
POLITICO Pro, Inside Health Policy, Morning Consult and The Hill featured a letter from Research!America sent to House and Senate leaders urging them to pass the “Cures” legislation before the end of the 114th Congress.

Ellie Dehoney, Research!America’s VP of policy and advocacy, was quoted in Modern Healthcare acknowledging that prescription drug costs is an important issue, but should be addressed in a different legislative vehicle other than Cures.

Strengthening Investments in Basic Research
The Boston Globe published a letter to the editor written by Woolley about the need for more federal spending in all levels of health research, from basic to prevention. “While the payoffs of supporting research may take a while to be realized, they won’t happen at all if we don’t make fueling medical progress a priority in this nation,” she wrote.

Science and the Election
Research!America board member Rush Holt, Ph.D., CEO, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Harold Varmus, M.D., Nobel Laureate and Lewis Thomas University professor, Weill Cornell Medicine were quoted in Scientific American following a blue ribbon town hall about science and the 2016 presidential election.

Launching the Precision Medicine Initiative
In a UCSF News Services article about the California Precision Medicine Consortium, Keith R. Yamamoto, Ph.D., Research!America board member and executive vice dean of the school of medicine at University of California, San Francisco, underscored the importance of local community engagement to support the precision medicine initiative.

National Academy of Medicine
Research!America board member and National Academy of Medicine president, Victor Dzau, M.D., was quoted in a Becker’s Hospital Review article about the new National Academy of Medicine members.

Public Health and the Election
Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association and Research!America board member, discussed local ballot initiatives, such as a tax on sweetened beverages, in the upcoming election in a blog article published in The Huffington Post.

IN BRIEF
- Research!America board member Martha Hill, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, was honored as a Living Legend during the American Academy of Nursing’s annual conference.
- The National Disease Research Interchange (NDRI), chaired by Research!America board member Mary J.C. Hendrix, will host its annual scientific symposium on November 18.
  http://bit.ly/2exedR1
- Applications are now being accepted for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) 2017 Mass Media Science & Engineering Fellows program through January 15.
- The University of California, San Francisco is joining other institutions to help implement the NIH’s nationwide Precision Medicine Initiative Cohort Program.
Inspiring Leaders and Advocates

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Fellows say they plan to use recommendations shared at an advocacy workshop on November 19 to build stronger relationships with elected officials, potential funders, media and non-scientists. Research!America president and CEO Mary Woolley discussed the latest developments in Congress related to research and health, where current presidential and congressional candidates stand on support for research, recommendations on how to connect with policymakers, and public perception of science and scientists. Woolley emphasized the importance of being an advocate for research, especially in the coming year with a new Administration and Congress. To view the presentation, visit http://bit.ly/2fElLcw.

Mary Woolley Receives National Academy of Medicine Yarmolinsky Medal

During the National Academy of Medicine’s annual meeting on October 17, Mary Woolley, president and CEO of Research!America, received the Adam Yarmolinsky Medal, awarded to a member from a discipline outside the health and medical sciences who has contributed to the mission of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) over a significant period.

“Serving the public’s interest is what the National Academy of Medicine is all about. Adam Yarmolinsky epitomized that. He was clear about the importance of sensitivity to the public – including the political – frame of serving the public’s interest. Yarmolinsky served several U.S. Presidents with that sensitivity clearly in mind,” Woolley said in her acceptance speech.

Lynn R. Goldman, dean and professor of environmental occupation and health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University, received the Walsh McDermott Medal. Donna E. Shalala, president of the Clinton Foundation (on leave from University of Miami, where she is trustee professor of political science and health policy), received the David Rall Medal.

“Year after year, these exceptional members have demonstrated their dedication to improving health and advancing science,” said NAM president and Research!America board member, Victor J. Dzau, M.D. “Their service to the NAM and the Academies in so many capacities has been invaluable to our work as we continue to address critical challenges in health and medicine.”

Raising Awareness for Diabetes

For the month of November, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) will showcase real-life stories of friends, families and neighbors managing the day-to-day triumphs and challenges of diabetes. The 2016 Diabetes Awareness Month campaign, sponsored by Colgate Total and Medtronic Diabetes, invites the community to use the hashtag #ThisIsDiabetes to share personal stories and start a dialogue about what it means to live with diabetes.

The 2016 theme, This Is Diabetes, is intended to raise awareness about the struggles of the disease and create a sense of urgency about this growing public health crisis. Twenty-nine million Americans live with diabetes, and the chronic illness dictates how they organize their day, what they eat at every meal, how they choose to be physically active and how they spend their money. People with diabetes can have health care costs that are 2.3 times higher than someone without diabetes, as type 1 and type 2 require very specific forms of treatment.

For more information and to access an online toolkit with resources, visit http://bit.ly/2ePvFjg.

Cancer Moonshot Report Announces Public and Private Sector Collaborations to Advance Research Goals

The Cancer Moonshot initiative to speed the development of cancer treatments has made important strides in the past year but still faces challenges in many areas, according to a report released by Vice President Biden in October. The report included announcements of new commitments toward the goals of the Cancer Moonshot from both the public and private sectors.

Over 70 commitments have been announced to date, ranging from hundreds of millions of additional dollars toward research from the public and private sector to data sharing partnerships to make it easier for doctors, researchers and patients to access data to make decisions about treatment, prevention and research.

Among the commitments: The National Cancer Institute, Amazon Web Services, and Microsoft are collaborating to build a sustainable model for maintaining cancer genomic data in the cloud. The Department of Defense (DoD) is establishing a groundbreaking new study to transform our understanding of the biological basis of cancer. Currently, one-fourth of patients miss or reschedule their treatments and appointments because of transportation issues. Ride sharing services Lyft and Uber are expanding their support of affordable, reliable transportation for cancer patients. For the full report, visit http://bit.ly/2e7SH5m.
The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) represents the country’s leading innovative biopharmaceutical research companies, which are devoted to discovering and developing medicines that enable patients to live longer, healthier and more productive lives. Since 2000, PhRMA member companies have invested more than half a trillion dollars in the search for new treatments and cures, including an estimated $58.8 billion in 2015 alone.

PhRMA formed in 1958 to represent America’s leading biopharmaceutical research companies and help promote smart public policy that supports medical research to address patient needs. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., with offices in leading biopharmaceutical research communities across the country and around the world, PhRMA advocates for policies to support the discovery and development of innovative medicines for patients. PhRMA’s proactive policy priorities include: efforts to modernize the drug discovery, development and approval process, promoting value-driven health care, engaging and empowering consumers and addressing market distortions.

“At PhRMA, we are focused on our members’ efforts to spur research and development of new treatments and cures for patients. To do this, we need a policy framework that allows biopharmaceutical innovation to prosper and removes barriers to patients’ accessing lifesaving medicines,” said William Chin, M.D., chief medical officer and executive vice president at PhRMA.

As part of their efforts to bring new, innovative medicines and cures to patients in need, PhRMA member companies are driving the vast majority of R&D investment into new medicines for serious illnesses. In fact, PhRMA member companies have invested more than half a trillion dollars since 2000. This amount represents about one in every five dollars spent on domestic R&D by U.S. businesses.

PhRMA also plays an important role in the larger health care ecosystem that includes universities and government research centers like the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As a leader in this ecosystem, America’s biopharmaceutical companies conduct the critical R&D needed to bring new medicines to patients and bear the associated costs and risks.

As a result of past and current investments, the promise for patients has never been greater. Today, there are over 7,000 medicines in development worldwide, treatments like harnessing the body’s immune system to tackle cancer are becoming more common and increasingly, medicines are becoming personalized for patients’ individual needs.

One area where PhRMA member companies are rapidly making progress is in the autoimmune diseases space. In September, PhRMA released its Medicines in Development for Autoimmune Diseases 2016 report, spotlighting the more than 300 medicines currently in the research pipeline for autoimmune diseases. With more than 80 identified autoimmune diseases and more than 23.5 million Americans affected, the need to push these drugs through the pipeline is critical.

PhRMA’s members are proud to lead the way in R&D to bring new medicines to patients in need, and applauds all those within the medical research ecosystem working toward the same goal of improving patient lives.

For more information, visit www.phrma.org.

Majority Agree Medicines Have Improved Their Quality of Life
Do you agree or disagree that medicines available today have improved your quality of life?

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SOURCE: A RESEARCHAMERICA AND SCIENTIFEDEBATE.ORG SURVEY OF U.S. ADULTS CONDUCTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ZOGBY ANALYTICS IN JUNE 2016. DUE TO ROUNDING, THE TOTAL MAY NOT ADD TO 100%.
Tell Your Congressmen: We Need #CuresNOW

Congress has demonstrated a bipartisan commitment to advancing medical research, but there is more to be done. Tell your representatives that they need to get the Cures legislation across the finish line this year. If they don’t, we are left with the status quo—and the status quo isn’t good enough. Time is running out. Tell Congress we need #CuresNOW!


COMING UP

- Mar. 15, 2017 - Research!America Advocacy Awards Dinner, Washington, DC, researchamerica.org/advocacy_awards

PHOTO CREDIT:
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