

# **ASHG**

**American Society of Human Genetics**  
ADVOCATE UPDATE

## Join the Virtual Rally for Medical Research



The 2020 [Rally for Medical Research](#) will take place virtually on September 17. The Rally brings together hundreds of scientists, patients, clinicians, and others in the community to meet with their representatives in Congress to advocate for NIH funding and the advancement of biomedical research. ASHG is a proud sponsor of the event and we encourage all ASHG Advocates to participate. The deadline to register is August

24. ASHG committee members, Emily Davenport, PhD, and Grace Kwon, attended the 2019 Rally to share their stories with congressional offices. Read more about their experience at [ASHG](#).

For communication tips, you can now view a [recording](#) of the second webinar in ASHG advocacy webinar series, “Virtual Advocacy: Engaging Congress on Genetics and Genomics.”

## Impact of COVID-19 on Research and Labs



Last month at a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee [hearing](#), NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins, estimated that COVID-19 related disruptions would cost the NIH about \$10 billion. The Senate unveiled a COVID-19 relief package that included \$15.5 billion emergency funding for the NIH to help offset those costs. ASHG has joined the research community in [supporting this proposal](#). Meanwhile, the House

passed Fiscal Year 2021 spending packages that would also provide NIH with emergency relief funding in addition to its regular appropriations totaling \$47 billion. To date, there has yet to be an

agreement on how to provide NIH with relief funding to cover supplements for grants and personnel costs for research facilities, and fund additional grants for graduate students, postdocs, and other trainees. Contact your representatives in Congress through our [Advocacy Center](#) and urge them to support relief funding for the NIH.

## Take Action

### NIH Human Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board Meeting

Last year, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a new [policy](#) for federally funded human fetal tissue research. The policy mandated review by an ethics advisory board on extramural grants proposing research using human fetal tissue. The [15-member panel](#) met for the first time last month. ASHG signed onto a [multi-society letter](#) to the NIH and members of the board, reiterating support for the use of fetal tissue in research.

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The American Society of Human Genetics  
6120 Executive Boulevard, Suite 500  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

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