

ASHG

American Society of Human Genetics

ADVOCATE UPDATE

ASHG Updates Policy Platform

The Messenger

December 2020



From the President's Desk

Message from the President: ASHG Continues to Focus on Member Value

Anthony Wynshaw-Boris, MD, PhD, reflects on his year as ASHG President, what ASHG offers your field year-round, and leadership's commitment to doing even more.

Federal laws and policies have a major influence on genetics and genomics research and translation to advances in the clinic and the broader society. It is therefore imperative for ASHG to have a strong voice in how such laws and policies are developed and implemented. In the latest issue of the [Messenger](#), the Society outlines a few [policy priorities](#) that will guide future policy and advocacy work. This includes continuing to advocate for funding for genetics and

genomics research, diversity in research cohorts and the workforce, and protecting research participant privacy, among others.

As the world's largest genetics society, ASHG members are the true drivers of change on policies that affect the community both collectively and individually. Thank you to all ASHG Advocates for your advocacy and engagement this past year!

Congress Continues Negotiations on Omnibus Spending Bill and COVID-19 relief

Congressional leadership is negotiating legislation to finalize funding for the federal government for Fiscal Year 2021, including the National Institutes of Health, and provide relief for COVID-19. Currently, the federal government is being funded through a Continuing Resolution (CR), a temporary measure that allows the government to continue to operate while negotiations continue. This CR expires today, December 18, and [reports](#) indicate that Congress will pass another CR to allow Congress to continue to work through the weekend.

Advocacy in 2021: New Administration & New Congress



Heading into the new year with a new Administration and the 117th Congress, ASHG will continue to advocate for biomedical research in partnership with the broader community. The Society has joined over 300 organizations in a [letter](#) led by the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research to President-elect Biden. The letter recognizes his strong support for science and urges the Administration to consider key

foundational principles moving forward.

ASHG will also continue to urge Congress to include COVID-19 related relief for researchers in emergency spending packages, as negotiations continue. ASHG has signed onto multi-society letters led by [Research!America](#), and [AAAS and the American Society for Microbiology](#) (ASM), in these efforts.

In Other News

- The Roundtable on Genomics and Precision Health Co-Chairs, Geoffrey Ginsburg, MD, PhD, and Michelle Penny, PhD, outlines the group's future plans toward making genomic medicine a reality for all, in the [Messenger](#).
- Early this month, the NIH's All of Us Research Program returned the first genetic results to research participants. Read more about this milestone at the [NIH Director's Blog](#).
- NIH has released [preliminary findings](#) from a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on NIH extramural and intramural researchers and institutions.
- The call for applications for the National Academy of Medicine's [Emerging Leaders in Health and Medicine Scholars](#) is open until January 13, 2021.

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