

National Institutes of Health deputy director for Extramural Research, Michael Lauer, and deputy director of the Office for Extramural Research, Jodi Black speaks with the ASBMB's public affairs director Benjamin Corb about the impact of COVID-19 on the research community and NIH efforts to aid grant recipients.

Benjamin Corb: So, I want to thank all of the participants who are in the room listening to this conversation. To answer some of the questions that people have asked from the very get-go: yes, we are recording this so we will be able to share it with people at the conclusion or later on, either today or tomorrow, so people will be able to get the same information that comes out of this meeting. So, thank you to our partners at the NIH for letting us do that. Yes, your lines are muted. We've done that to try to avoid there being any kind of bandwidth issues or jumpiness. So, if you do have questions, there is a Q&A tab that you see on your zoom window on the bottom. I invite you to click in there and type in any questions that you have. And as a moderator for the discussion I will be jumping into there and making sure that your questions are brought to Dr. Black and eventually Dr. Lauer as he joins in. There's a chat window there, you can put comments in there as well. But I'll be really monitoring the Q&A block here to get things taken care of.

With that, I want to thank everybody for the time and for their patience as we coordinate through this and I'd like to hand it over to Dr. Black for some opening comments. Dr. Jodi Black is the Deputy Director for the Office of Extramural Research at the NIH. And the floor is yours. Thank you for joining us.

Jodi Black: Okay, so before I get started, I just wanted to see if Sarina is emailing with Mike to see if she can help him. Figure out how to get in.

Sarina Neote: Yes, I am.

Jodi Black: Oh, so you guys are talking. Okay. Very good. He said he's in an infinite loop. I don't know what that means. Sarina, I hope you do.

Sarina Neote: Go ahead and I'll talk with Dr. Lauer.

Jodi Black: Okay, so thank you for agreeing to have Mike and I come and talk to you about what NIH is working on, and how we're being affected by and trying to compensate for all the issues that are surrounding COVID oriented interruptions to how we work. And I want to say that I hope everyone is staying safe and practicing social distancing. All of us at NIH are teleworking except for those who are required to be on site to deal with either important maintenance issues or are working in our intramural program in the clinical centers, seeing patients. Everyone else is working, but we're all teleworking from home. You might know that our ERA of electronic research information systems and administration transitions to the cloud over the weekend. And so, there was a disruption in services for a little while. But it looks like that went smoothly and things should be up and running at full capacity, either late tonight or first thing tomorrow morning. So, I just wanted to give you a heads up about that.

I think that you wanted to hear a little bit about what we're doing with funding mechanisms and grant extensions and what might be available from various supplement packages that we've been receiving. So, if that's correct, I can start with that and just give you a little bit of an overview. The first thing I'd like to say is we've developed a site that's all related to COVID information that we've consolidated everything that we're doing on one site. If you go to grants.nih.gov and

click on the banner at the top there for Coronavirus. You'll see a comprehensive listing of all the notices, all the supplemental notices, all of the administrative flexibilities, frequently asked questions, and a list at the bottom of all the funding opportunities that we've put out in response to the COVID work. And so, with regard to this settlement, why don't I start there? You might know that several Institutes have received supplemental funding for COVID related work. They are an NINAIID, NIEHS, NCAT—the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences—and NIBIB, which is the Biomedical Engineering and Imaging Institute, the Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, the Common Fund and the National Library of Medicine. All of those Institutes have received additional funding for COVID related work as part of the presidential declared public health emergency. And the other Institutes are also allowed to do work in these areas for cover related work, they use their regular appropriate funds. What we are allowed to do in the conditions of a public health emergency is very rapidly requests administrative supplements. For anytime during the project period, for anytime the project period is still active, even if the project period will be entering into a no cost extension by the time the award is going to be made. So I would encourage you to look for all of the notices of special interest and OSI that are listed in the NIH guide for all of the work relevant across most of the Institutes that are accepting both administrative and competitive supplements. Competitive supplements, or competitive revisions as they are called, allow current awardees to expand their scope. That means they can get more money to do something that wasn't previously peer reviewed. And that review for those supplements in this case is going to be done very quickly within the institute issuing this issuing the request for applications using a modified version of peer review. That that can happen using Institute staff very quickly. So, we're trying to make these awards within within 60 days if possible. So, take a look at that. We see that patient care and researcher safety is our first priority. So, we want to make sure that the way— Oh, Mike, you're on. Can you hear me? I see you. He's trying to get the sound up. I'm going to pause for a minute. Can you hear me Mike?

Michael Lauer: Yes, keep going Jodi.

Benjamin Corb: And thank you for joining.

Jodi Black: Okay I'm going to tell you what I've done so far, and then I'll let you take over but I, I've told them about the supplemental funding to which institutes and the notices. I was just about to go through patient care and staying up to date. So, do you want to go from there?

Michael Lauer: No, keep going. I've been actually listening as an attendee; it's been great.

Jodi Black: Okay, so I was just summarizing the fact that we consider patient care and research safety to be the first priority. We've gotten a lot of flexibilities from the Office of Management and Budget and from the Department of Health and Human Services on how to enable that in the community. And so, as you know, donating personal protective equipment is allowed. And anything that the laboratories need to do to help with the epidemic is allowed without prior approval. So, all those administrative flexibilities are noted on our website also. Since this is a rapidly evolving situation, we're continuing to get guidance; several memos have come out recently; the latest one was M2020. That gave us the administrative flexibilities to provide personal protective equipment and other relevant equipment that could help assist with the public health emergency. As these new administrative or any other flexibilities or guidance has come out, we immediately summarize that, create FAQs, and put it onto our website. And I noted the website earlier, all the latest information continues to be there. All of the funding opportunities I mentioned are there. Most of them right now are in the form of either

administrative or competitive revisions. NIAID has a funding opportunity or so out. But as you know, there are several supplements that were provided to NIH. So, in the future, one could expect additional funding opportunities. I don't know what they are yet, but that is something to be on the lookout for. We have provided some flexibilities for our application deadlines.

So, peer review continues to work. It's working all in using internet-oriented capabilities or phone capabilities. But peer to peer review meetings are continuing. Most of the review meetings have had some experience with conducting peer review in that format. So, it wasn't a big surprise. But what we've done is we've extended our application receipt date and sort of a blanket way by allowing all applications to come in late up until May 1. If they come in by May 1, regardless of what the receipt date was between like March 9th and then we can guarantee that it'll go to the to the council round this next council round. If it comes in after May 1, we cannot guarantee that unfortunately, and we would prefer that they come in for the next council round. However, given that there have been a lot of concerns and conversations from the community about submitting applications and haste, finding silly errors later, unintended mistakes were made, applicants have been asking if they could withdraw their applications and resubmit them with the correct information, not redoing the science, but where you know, where, where mistakes were made, because things were done hastily because people were clearing out of lab because institutions were shutting down. And so, we're going to allow that also because we understand the distresses associated with that.

We also—We have special considerations for early stage investigators. You may be aware that early stage investigators can extend that time period for a variety of reasons; medical reasons, military reasons; birth. We're going to allow that same flexibility for COVID-related reasons. We know this is going to be especially hard on junior investigators who have children at home who are all homeschooling. It's going to be very difficult to sort of divert your time between trying to make sure your seven-year-old understands how to do, you know, a zoom learning session and getting your work done. Our own staff are struggling with those same issues. And because of that, we have implemented what we call maximum telework, where it doesn't matter when during the day you get the work done as long as you get your work done. So, if you have to start for a couple hours in the morning, and then spend time with your children and finish up at night; we expect the same thing is happening with our investigators and we realize that some things can be done as a lab, like perhaps writing or planning, but even that will be difficult with young children at home. So, we're trying to maximize our flexibilities and our considerations under those circumstances.

We've gotten a lot of questions about how and whether and when you can continue to support salaries from investigators that are on grants. And even if they're home, and they can't actually do the lab work, they can do some work. But the circumstances that I just explained are applying across the board. So, you can charge the grant for salary for the folks listed for salary support, as long as your institution has that as part of their policies. And there's been some confusion around that. It doesn't matter if you have separate policies for a variety of funders. If your NIH policy allows this to happen, or if you have one policy for all your funders that allows this to happen, it's fine with us. And if you continue to have questions, you know, please send them to us. We do try to meet and have conversations regularly with folks who have questions; we can add the answers to our FAQ to try to help everybody else out. But you should always reach out and you know, tell your constituents to reach out to their program official that they can help at least point you in the right direction.

Let's see. So, we've got a few guidances that are specific to human-subjects research and animal-subjects work also on our sites. We know that clinical trials are going to have a lot of disruptions; we completely understand that. We know [blank] isn't going to happen as it's needed. We understand that changes to patient visits will have to be made. We ask that you, you know, have conversations with your local IRBs and we are allowing local IRBs, for this for this time period, during the during this epidemic, rather than adhering strictly to the NIH single IRB policy; even OHRP is giving us some flexibilities for the revised common rule, single IRB. So, if you have questions about that, and you want to start a study, you can contact us or you can contact them, but they're allowing us some flexibilities for single IRB during this COVID period. But we also have some advice on our website about what to consider if you have to make changes to study visits, how to maximize protection for the investigators and the patients. We understand that accrual is going to be put off. We understand that at the end of the day, we may need to make adjustments on our end. We advise you to immediately consult with your program officials; they're around, let them know what's happening. Let them know what your plans are, and let them know that you've spoken to your IRB and do understand whatever advice it was that you got from them.

Let's see, so I told you about extension. So that's sort of most I think what we're doing, I talked about, you know, accommodations for loss of time for you know; I talked about early stage investigators, but we understand there's going to be time lost on work, regardless of where you are in your career. We would hope that institutions cooperated and collaborate with funding agencies to make sure that, especially for folks on tenure track, that adjustments are made to their to their 10 year time and what counts for tenure—the same way we're making adjustments for allowing flexibilities to extend, you know, earlier stages of career opportunities with regard to NIH policy. So, we hope to be able to work together with you on that. A lot of flexibilities, a lot of considerations are going to need to be put in place so we don't lose an entire generation of investigators. We've all already in some way invested in either through startup packages or Training Awards or you know, early grant awards. So let's not lose them to this to this unfortunate set of circumstances. And I think I'll stop there and see if you have any questions. Mike, you might have something more to add.

Michael Lauer: That was a great overview. Thank you very much, Jodi, my apologies for coming in late. Usually Zoom works beautifully, but for some reason, it kept sending me around and around. So, Ben, you want us to ask answer questions, or how do you want to do this?

Benjamin Corb: Yeah, I will go through; I've got a list of questions here. So, we'll continue to encourage people to send the questions in via the Q&A tab. And again, I want to thank Dr. Lauer and Dr. Black for joining us. So, thank you so much. So, one of the questions that I've seen come ups really often here is there are some upcoming grant deadlines that are happening. **There is a new June 1; there's a May 18th deadline. Are those deadlines, you know, are they planning to be extended? How or should people plan to respond to that?**

Michael Lauer: So, at this point in time, there is no intention to extend any deadlines beyond May the first. Now, of course, you know how things are going to evolve only time will tell, but at this point in time beyond May the first we're not planning to extend any deadlines. Part of this is that there are certain realities of the fiscal year and when funds have to be obligated that we have to deal with. That's it.

Benjamin Corb: Thank you. Oh, so people should continue to plan on meeting that deadline and doing everything they can to submit as high-quality grant as they can, with the understanding

that there is flexibility that exists in the process that you all have been very generous with going forward. Another question here—

Jodi Black: We have a—our standard late policy that allows two weeks for a special circumstance that requires a cover letter. It will remind you about that. It's just our standard late application policy. That is staying in place. So, a reminder.

Benjamin Corb: Thank you. Here's a question here. **Can you use unused grant money, such as participants reimbursement and labs not done during this time towards staff salary?**

Michael Lauer: I don't see what you're talking about.

Jodi Black: Are you talking about re-budgeting?

Michael Lauer: Yeah.

Jodi Black: Yeah, I think that's the kind of thing you would need prior approval for. Contact your problem official.

Benjamin Corb: Okay, thank you. This question here; **I'm confused about the NIH forms to use for administrative supplements versus competitive revision supplements. I can't find this information on the website. Can you all help to point in a direction there?**

Jodi Black: So, the both of those, both of those notices of funding opportunities and notices, the notices of a special interest will point to either a parent administrative supplemental fellow or a parent urgent competitive revision fellow. The package that you use, the forms that you use, will either be in the notices an instruction, or it will be the exact same form that you use for the parent award. Okay, if it doesn't say otherwise, it's the exact same form used for the parent of work. So, if you have an RO1 you'll use the R form. Is that the question?

Benjamin Corb: I believe so. **Will there be any accommodations for training grants T32s, Ks, Fs extensions of funding/re-budgeting?**

Michael Lauer: So, extensions of time, yes and that's already in our FAQs. So, we understand that this is a period of—there's downtime period, people are not as productive as they can be right now for—for obvious reasons. In addition, special cases, there are some people who are being pulled off to clinical service, and therefore they're not able to meet their research time obligations at this time. So, time extensions; the answer to that is yes. And in fact, that's already part of our standard policy that we allow time extensions, when special circumstances come up. With regard to money, you know, more money later on down the line. We're not in a position to say. We cannot make that kind of a commitment right now. Because right now the money just isn't there.

Benjamin Corb: I will throw out there for the questioner that we at ASBMB have been pushing exactly the need for supplemental funding for investigators in that way. We've been up on Capitol Hill having that discussion with staffers up there, but having the discussion with staffers there. So, I know that everybody is aware of the need and a lot of people are advocating for the need for that funding. So, I just wanted to throw that out there.

Next question. **A major disruption has been made to mouse colonies with substantial ongoing costs and time lost and getting back to where we were. Are there any accommodations being contemplated for people with animal models?**

Michael Lauer: So, a couple of thoughts on that. One is that if you haven't seen it already, OLAR, our office of laboratory animal welfare has put up their own set of FAQs. They have their own dedicated web page which you can find from our dedicated web page that answers a lot of questions regarding animal welfare. We understand that a number of colonies are being culled. We also understand that breeding has stopped. And this is one of a number of delays and reasons for losses of productivity over time. There are a couple ways of thinking about this. One is that we all understand this. Investigators are not able to meet all of their aims or all of their goals because of the disruptions and this is one of those kinds of disruptions. We understand that there are delays in getting work done. What we cannot do at this point is to say, and this goes to the last question, that we have the money that will make that whole—to rebreed that colony and to get that colony, you know, back up and running again. We can't say that we have that money because—because right now we simply don't. But we do understand that, you know, if you come back with a progress report that says from February of 2020 to whenever we essentially got nothing done and we lost our animal colonies. Unlike what might happen under normal circumstances, we're not going to be surprised by that. We understand that and we're not going to penalize you for that.

Benjamin Corb: Great, thank you. **Does the NIH have any plans to support labs that quote unquote at risk? So, for instance, an investigator that has only one R01 and only has one final year in the grant.**

Michael Lauer: Okay, well this is something we've been doing with irrespective of COVID-19. Part of our efforts of supporting the next generation researcher's initiative is also recognizing investigators who are at risk. It was actually something we explicitly discussed at the advisory committee to the directors meeting last December. We presented some data on how well at-risk investigators are doing. We define an at-risk investigator as someone, whom as best as we can tell if they do not get funded at a competition this year will have no funding next year. What we are currently doing and have been doing actually for a while is that we identify those investigators and the relevant grants and we, on a regular basis about every two weeks, we inform our colleagues at the ICs that here are some grants that got good score, that come from investigators who as best as we can tell are at risk and we would like you to consider that when you are making your funding decisions. That seems to have had some impact because there has been a substantial increase in the funding success of at-risk investigators over the last few years since we've been doing it. Although it is far from perfect. We understand that. That's already built into—if you want to say built into our DNA. And it certainly would be a part of what we continue to do.

Benjamin Corb: These questions are, I think, related ESI questions. **When will ESI extensions actually be allowed? People have been advised by the office of extramural research to wait until the university opens back up to apply for that extension. But it doesn't--there's no black and white date for when that is going to happen. And another related question is will individuals have to apply for those extensions or will those extensions be made automatically?**

Michael Lauer: Jodi?

Jodi Black: Yeah, so um yeah, we're asking that people apply for them. They'll be granted but we want to be able to keep track of how folks are being affected for one thing. And we actually had a hard time coming up with a blanket way, a fair blanket way, of looping everybody in. But my advice would be if their ESI time period is coming to an end in the near future to go ahead and request an extension and send it in, and we'll take care of it. It doesn't matter if the institution has opened back up. I think it would be better for the time for it not to lapse, okay?

Benjamin Corb: Great thank you. Keep the questions coming in, everybody. Um, we've got another half an hour so we'll try to talk less and answer more. **Does the NIH have recommendations for applications such as S10s that require a commitment of institutional support in a scenario where institutions are now hesitant to guarantee financial support due to the financial losses they are experiencing from COVID?**

Jodi Black: That is a good question. And so, you know, in order to be awarded an S10 the institutional support is part of the commitment. So um, let us—let me go back to the organization; the part of the NIH that works with those awards and see if we can come up with an FAQ and a fair way to deal with that.

Benjamin Corb: **Is there any concern about how pay lines are going to be affected by the shutdown?**

Michael Lauer: Uh, no. Um, I mean, one concern that we had at the very beginning was that we may not be able to get all the grants reviewed that would potentially be up for funding in FY20. But it does not look like that is going to be the case. We can't say that for sure yet. But peer review was able to continue to run one hundred percent virtually despite the disruption. And our staff are continuing to work and as you can see the two of us are still working today. No, at this point in time, we have lots of concerns but that isn't one of them.

Benjamin Corb: Great, thank you. Um, I think I know the answer to this question so I'm hoping the answer you give is the same I'm thinking it is. **Should we expect budget cuts to non-COVID related research grants?**

Michael Lauer: Okay Ben, what's the answer to that?

Benjamin Corb: I sure hope the answer is absolutely not but I want to hear you say that.

Michael Lauer: Yeah, that's right. What is true is that—is that a number of the institutes have identified certain COVID-related projects as being high priority. And so that may mean if they're funding out of appropriated funds that there will be greater priority to those particular projects. That would be true at any given point in time. Um, but no there are no plans that we are going to specifically call out non-COVID 19 grants and say you get an extra percentage cut because of X, Y and Z.

Benjamin Corb: Thank you. **Shutting down the lab has resulted in damage to some instruments. Can budget revisions be made to replace—to make up for that damage?**

Michael Lauer: So again I, I think that's similar to some of the questions we've addressed before. Normally in a situation like that if there has been damage to an instrument that entails a significant expense, that might be a legitimate reason to submit an administrative supplement. That would be true under normal circumstances. And then the institute may or may not offer the

supplement, depending upon where it fits with everything else; what are there available funds and what their priorities are. In one of our FAQs, we actually borrowed some language that NIMH sent out to their researchers that we put into the FAQs that it'd probably would make sense to wait until a little bit of time has gone by before making any kind of administrative supplement request. First, to assess how much time has actually gone by; what is the degree of the damage. Also, to get a better assessment from your program official as to what's the wisdom of that, what's the likelihood of that being successful. In any case, it's important for you to be in touch with your program officer to get some sense of that. The only exceptions to those would be for obviously for COVID-19 related research, where we're right now calling and we're asking for supplement requests. The other is if there really really truly is a mission critical issue that has to be addressed within a short period of time. And I would say for that, the key point and that we write that in our FAQ, the key point is to talk with your program official.

Benjamin Corb: Thank you. This is a question; **this person got their notice of award last week and since they are unable to do very much of anything, would the NIH consider delaying their state date based on when they got the NOA?**

Jodi Black: I think that's the same thing as extending their time. So, I think they can just call their program official and tell them what the circumstances are and figure out what the appropriate grant machination would be to make sure that the time- the year is given when the year is needed.

Benjamin Corb: Great.

Jodi Black: We are allowing automatic extensions of time. Folks can go into a no cost extension with funds even now so that isn't something anyone should worry about.

Benjamin Corb: Thank you. **Will postdocs on individual NRSAs be able to renegotiate their aims if the shutdown makes completing the original scope of work unfeasible?**

Michael Lauer: Yeah, I mean, that's something they can do anyway. That would have to be done in conjunction with NIH staff. But that's something that they can do anyway, um—even according to our standard policy.

Benjamin Corb: **Is a BSL 4 lab required to do work on COVID-19 related experiments?**

Jodi Black: No.

Michael Lauer: No.

Jodi Black: You can do a BSL 2 with 3 procedures or a BSL 3. Depending upon what you're doing. I mean if you're spinning things, you might want to have a BSL 3, if you're spinning human samples at a high speed.

Benjamin Corb: I want to point out in here there's not a question, but a comment that's saying that you guys are doing a great job and your help is appreciated so you know why not throw that out there. Just to let you know people like what you're doing.

Michael Lauer: Thank you.

Benjamin Corb: **Will NIH expand COVID-19 related research now that that it is clear there is multi-organ damage to kidneys, hearts, and lungs?**

Michael Lauer: So, there are already a number of the institutes, in fact I would almost venture to say most of the institutes, have already put out announcements requesting applications for admin supplements or competing revisions in part because exactly that. The recognition that this is a multi-system disease.

Benjamin Corb: **How does effort certification work while lab staff are being paid on the grant but not doing work in the lab?**

Jodi Black: So, a lot of institutes have their own way of doing effort certification so they should follow their own policies for certifying efforts with the understanding that under these circumstances policies that allow you to charge to the grant stay in place and you can charge to the grant.

Benjamin Corb: Okay, I see a couple people in here that are asking this question so I'm just going to reiterate no, they are no discussions to reduce current budgets of ongoing grants. **So, several people have continued to ask that so thought we'd underline that point. Who should someone send a request to extend an ESI?**

Jodi Black: There's a ESI website. There's a link to send the request to. I can't remember what it is off the top of my head. If you can't find it, send it to me Jodi black; I'll get it to the right place.

Benjamin Corb: Great. **Do I have to have a parent grant from a specific institute to apply for a COVID-19 related supplemental from that institute?**

Jodi Black: No, the institutes will work out it out on the back end. But no.

Benjamin Corb: Um, I'm drawing through here. **Will any funds be halted for currently awarded NIH R15 project if it is in the middle of the award period? The answer to that is no, correct?**

Michael Lauer: No.

Benjamin Corb: **Great, are you going to offer noncompetitive revisions to existing awards to increase the duration of time of awards to make up for lost time? I think the answer there is yes, correct?**

Michael Lauer: Yup.

Benjamin Corb: **For this funding period, how strict is the 25% limit for rollover due to the campus shut down on all purchase while purchases and experiments have stopped?**

Jodi Black: That is something you should talk to the PO about to talk about what the specifics are. The most important thing is for the program official to understand what changes are being made. And then all the prior approvals will be in place.

Benjamin Corb: A. bit of an open-ended question, um, **best advice for a postdoc just getting into first time NIH grant writing under these circumstances besides you know deep breathing and meditation.**

Michael Lauer: Great story for the grandchildren. Um, yeah, this is an unprecedented circumstance. Our staff continue to be; we're available so for specific issue they can certainly feel comfortable talking with us. I think—I don't know whether his is any consolation but everybody is in the same boat. And so, the cohort that they're going to be a part of and that they'll be writing grants alongside of, they're all in the exact same situation. All the federal agencies—the funding agencies are doing their best to be accommodating and as flexible as possible. And we all, NIH certainly, has as a top priority as Jodi mentioned to support the next generation of researchers. This has been a top priority of ours for many years and will continue to be so we'll all do the very best we can and I think that's the best I can say.

Benjamin Corb: **Are either of you jealous that Dr. Fauci has a bobblehead and a donut named after him?**

Michael Lauer: (laughter) Okay.

Benjamin Corb: Sorry, that was mine. We need levity in these times. I asked Dr. Lorsch that question and he said I can go ahead and order a Dr. Lorsch bobblehead if I want but he doesn't expect it to be a big seller. **How are the current situation—how does the current situation affect sponsoring international postdocs? Do you have any advice or recommendations there?**

Jodi Black: So right now, for international postdocs who had to go home. If they are already working on grants and they had to go home and they're essentially teleworking from their home country, we need to put in the proper work for foreign components because unfortunately that's what they are now. We need to just keep the paperwork in. As far as recruiting foreign postdocs, that's---there's travel restrictions. So, things can be done virtually but I don't--it's going to depend on the institutions and the institutions in our country to be able to move people around.

Benjamin Corb: Um, the question, **can we continue to pay staff on an NIH grant and do work on COVID-19 projects that do not have NIH funding?**

Jodi Black: What? I don't think I understand that question.

Benjamin Corb: I guess the question is can I pull some people in my lab off of their NIH-funded research to do a non-NIH funded COVID-related study?

Jodi Black: So, people are allowed to—if people are called up to serve in the COVID effort like physicians have to go to the front lines and come off their research funds, you just put a hold on the research grant. In that case, salary support becomes a concern, especially for clinical responsibilities; they're presumably earning clinical revenue so the institutions can help with salary support there. But essentially if they're pulled off to deal with COVID related issues, then the grant gets put into a holding pattern.

Benjamin Corb: **Will two weeks delayed submission under special circumstances be accepted for June 5th July 5th R01 deadlines on COVID-related grounds? Is it too early to tell?**

Michael Lauer: I don't think we have any...

Jodi Black: I think we need to go back and talk to our peer review leaders about this. I think we can anticipate that policies stay in place will be used. I don't think that has escaped them. So, I think we're going to have to have a conversation about how to handle it.

Benjamin Corb: Okay, thank you. I had question here. I lost where I was so we'll pick another one. Um, **I have an NIH grant and a no cost extension needing to be closed out in May. Are those two dates also extended or still needing to be met by then?**

Jodi Black: So, it's in its first no-cost extension?

Benjamin Corb: Uh huh [confirming].

Jodi Black: You can ask for a second one. We can put you in a second no-cost extension. It's not a problem. Just contact the program official. And um, the AOR.

Benjamin Corb: Thank you. Any expansion of K99 program anticipated, like extending eligibility to help maintain talented PDs in the academic pool?

Jodi Black: So that has the same extension flexibilities as an ESI; it's the same process. You explain what the issue is and you can get a year extension.

Michael Lauer: And we have an FAQ that specifically addresses that.

Benjamin Corb: Great, thank you. And again, I want to thank you both for your time. I know we have 13 more minutes if you guys are both good going to the top of the hour. Is that okay? Great, I'm trying to filter out to make sure we hit new-new ground on questions. This one is related to the question we just asked before but **is there a maximum number of no-cost extensions that can happen?**

Jodi Black Um, I think it's two.

Michael Lauer: That's right.

Jodi Black: Yeah. But if there are special circumstances and its within our legal abilities, you know. Waivers are granted if they're within our legal abilities. I'm just not sure about beyond two years. I'll have to ask some folks internally.

Benjamin Corb: Okay, **are there any changes to RPPR?**

Michael Lauer: So, they can be submitted late. We understand that. They can be submitted late. The one caveat to that is—well a couple things. One is that you should let us know it's going to be submitted late. We won't be surprised to hear that. And the second thing is we will not be able to process the type 5 until we have it.

Benjamin Corb: Okay. Question here about someone's T32 grant. **Our T32 grant has been unable to fill a slot that has been—that must be filled by 4/30/2020. We have contacted our grants management specialist at the institute and still have not heard back. Should we contact our program official instead?**

Jodi Black: Yes.

Michael Lauer: Yes.

Benjamin Corb: Another delay that we are experiencing in research is the restart and the recalibration of laboratory equipment. **Should we document our delays and share our specific circumstances with our program officers?**

Michael Lauer: Yes.

Jodi Black: Yup.

Benjamin Corb: If someone has a grant and cannot perform the experiments and the time period is coming to an end, can one have a no-cost extension? Yes, we've answered that. Sorry.

Michael Lauer: Yes.

Benjamin Corb: I have an RO1 that is on NCE from 4/1/2020 to 3/31/2021, can I still apply for an administrative supplemental?

Michael Lauer: Okay that one is a bit of a complicated question.

Jodi Black: Yeah so it depends. So, if you're applying to a competitive revision from any of the institutes that have supplement funds and that's NIEHS, NIAID, NCHES, NCAT, NHLBI, NIBIB, the National Library of Medicine and the Common Fund, the OD Common Fund, yes. But normally what we need is we need to receive from all the other institutes, we need to receive the application before it goes into no-cost extension, even if it's the day before. But the other institutes who receive supplemental funding can accept them when they're in a no-cost extension during this time period, after COVID started and before the year is up.

Benjamin Corb: For companies that are funded by NIH SBIR grants, is there any different or particular guidance for an SBIR recipient?

Jodi Black: Nope. Most of the notices include SBIR mechanisms. So that the notice of special interest points to the parents and the parent awards, the parent funding opportunities for competitive and administrative supplements includes most activity codes unless the notices says only certain activity codes so it's important to read it. But the deadline extensions are the same for them. It's especially important for them to understand that they can apply to a notice even if that institute doesn't hold their parent award. That's really important for the small business awards.

Benjamin Corb: What about P awards? Should we contact NIH program officers directly or through our institution?

Jodi Black: So yes, but if the notices include T mechanisms usually unless they specifically exclude it. So, all mechanisms are included for the revisions in most cases, all activity codes.

Benjamin Corb: This is a broader question. Is the NIH providing any information on how research laboratories may restart at some point in the future? A clearing house, a best practices, an informal survey, a sharing of information?

Michael Lauer: Um, that's a great question. So, at this point in time, right now, as we speak, we don't have any such guidance. There are conversations going on between the different funding agencies to talk about—about exactly that.

Benjamin Corb: There's someone here who is looking for clarification. A currently funded PI would be able to draw salary during the summer despite the challenges surrounding work productivity, is that correct?

Michael Lauer: Yes, as long as Jodi mentioned before, the institutional policies appropriately line up.

Benjamin Corb: **You mentioned that deadlines are not being extended. Does that apply also for training grants, T grants?**

Michael Lauer: Yes.

Benjamin Corb: **For competitive revision under NOSI, does the revision have to have connection with the parent grant or can the revision material be completely different from the parent grant?**

Jodi Black: So, if it's a competitive revision; that's called—that's an expansion in scope. So yes, you can move—you can use your expertise to move into a COVID oriented place; it'll get peer reviewed but internally. For an administrative supplement, no it has to be more of the same.

Benjamin Corb: **As many universities have hiring freezes, if personnel leave and cannot be replaced how will funding be flexible in terms of yearly budget rollovers?**

Jodi Black: So, grants are awarded to institutions not to people. So, they would have to—if the institution keeps the grant award, they would have to find a new acceptable PI. They would have to negotiate with the NIH about that.

Benjamin Corb: **We are all facing delays in generating preliminary data for our grants. For example, I am working, not me, I am working on an A1 application and not sure when I will be able to generate the additional preliminary data requested for A zero reviews. How is the NIH thinking about this?**

Michael Lauer: Well, I guess, a couple thoughts on that. One way we're thinking about it is we understand that and everybody is in the same boat. And you're going to have to make a strategic decision which is whether or not you go ahead and submit your A1 now with the understanding that it won't have that additional data or that you wait until time has gone by, and let's say wait a cycle, and then submit it then? That's a strategic kinda grantsmanship that one has to make. We don't really have any background experience to be able to give good advice on that. But the one thing we would say is that if something comes in now and you're not able to do all that much because of the COVID-19 disruption, we would all understand that. I think also along the same lines, it's not exactly the question that was asked but it's related is that we understand that lots of things that should be happening when a research project is ongoing can't happen because of the COVID-19 disruption. We are instructing our peer reviewers as well as our review staff not to consider that; in other words, assume that everything will be taken care of. For the purpose for the review, you should assume that everything is going to be working perfectly as the proposal says. Don't say well because of the COVID-19 disruption, they're not going to be able to do X, Y, and Z. That should not enter into the discussion. That is explicit instruction that we are giving to our review staff and is also going to be the explicit instructions that will be given to reviewers as well.

Benjamin Corb: We have reached the top of the hour. So, what I would like to do is before giving you all the opportunity if you have any closing remarks, I would like to thank you both for your time and effort. I know this is really an extenuating time and I know you all are working really hard to represent the needs of the more than the 500 people on this call but the thousands that were not on here. I want to thank you and I also want to thank my staff and your staff for helping to coordinate this. And if either of you have any closing remarks, I would love to just give you the opportunity for doing that.

Michael Lauer: Well, we thank you very much for the opportunity to meet with you all even though we are only seeing Ben, but Ben you look great, but we appreciate that. We appreciate the opportunity to answer your questions. And we all look forward to better days. Jodi?

Jodi Black: Also, same. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to help you with some of these questions and if you have more, send them to us and we'll get them into our FAQs.

Benjamin Corb: Great, thank you all so very much. Stay healthy, stay safe, and thank you for those that are participating. Have a great afternoon.

Michael Lauer: Great, thank you, take care.

Jodi Black: See you too, thanks, bye.

Benjamin Corb: Bye.