The ACADEMY for Radiology & Biomedical Imaging Research

Advancing Innovation in Imaging Science

October 17, 2025

Academy Policy & Legislative Update

Dear Academy Friends,

"As a child growing up in the late 20th century, my siblings and I played a simple game called 'Chicken'—a contest of willpower where we stared into each other's eyes, waiting to see who would blink first. The one who gave in lost. Today, a far more consequential version of that game is playing out on Capitol Hill. Three weeks into a government shutdown, with no resolution in sight, political leaders remain locked in a standoff—each side waiting for the other to blink."

The Shutdown. What We Know

- Today marks day 17 of the ongoing government shutdown, and Congress will go into the weekend without a funding agreement.
- This week, the Senate held its tenth vote on the House-passed continuing resolution (CR), which once again failed to advance.
- Extending Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits remains an obstacle, which are set to expire at the end of the year.
- Most federal employees are continuing to go without pay due to the shutdown; however, active-duty service members received their pay after the White House redirected several billion dollars from the Pentagon's research, development, testing, and evaluation accounts to cover payroll.
- Senate Democrats voted to block consideration of the annual Defense appropriations bill that includes a military pay raise in a 50–44 vote, which fell short of the 60 votes required to advance. All but three Democrats opposed the motion, arguing that the chamber should first reach a bipartisan agreement to end the shutdown before considering individual appropriations measures.

New Lawsuits Against the Trump Administration's $100,000 H-1B Visa Fee

In September, President Trump announced a $100,000 fee on H-1B applications. Trump explained that this fee is to address misuse of the H-1B visa program and to protect economic and national security.

- Before the sharp increase, H-1B visas cost employers $2,000 to $5,000.

In response to the Trump administration's $100,000 fee for new H-1B visa petitions, multiple higher education groups filed a lawsuit, citing catastrophic consequences from such a high fee. This lawsuit was brought forward by a diverse group: the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), labor unions representing higher education workers, and organizations from the healthcare, K-12, and religious sectors. The lawsuit is based on:

- The Trump administration's disregard for Congress's power of the purse.
- The new H-1B fees being in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA).
- The Trump Administration's failure to explain where the $100,000 fees will go.

By making H-1B visas inaccessible, there will be harm done to the US research enterprise, patient outcomes, and the American economy.

- Decreased support for university research, graduate programs, and clinical care.
- Decreased capacity to staff ICUs, emergency rooms, and surgical units.
- Decreased participation in the US economy.

The effects of the $100,000 H-1B visa fee are already being felt. A member of the AAUP received a job offer from a major research institution, but now that offer is on an indefinite hold due to the new H-1B visa fee.

MIT Responds to Trump Administration Compact

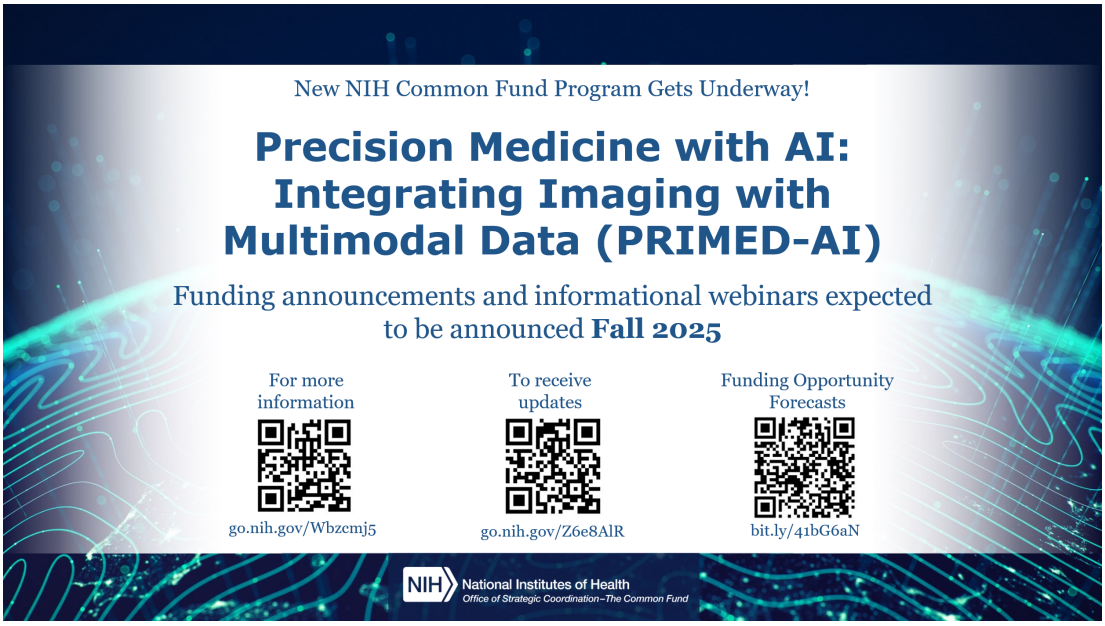
On October 1st, the US Department of Education sent nine institutions, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education."

On October 10th, President Sally Kornbluth of MIT responded to the letter by outlining the values by which the institution operates: rewarding merit, opening doors for students regardless of their financial background, and valuing free expression. Dr. Kornbluth explained that the values presented by the Trump administration's compact are not aligned with those of MIT. For example, the compact does not support MIT's core belief that scientific funding should be determined by merit. So, Dr. Kornbluth ended her letter by stating that MIT could not sign onto the compact and support the proposed approach.

In addition to MIT, the University of Southern California, the University of Pennsylvania, and Brown University have also declined the Trump administration's offer. No university has accepted the compact yet. Some, like Vanderbilt and Dartmouth, have expressed that they are reviewing the compact, but have not declared a final decision.

The compact was subsequently opened to all colleges and universities following a post from Trump on Truth Social. This is likely due to the compact's unpopularity with the initial nine institutions to which it was sent.

More info to follow on this NIH program…….



Together, we can amplify our voices to ensure continued investment in imaging science. Advocacy is important. The Academy has compiled a document that includes best practices for advocacy, scheduling meetings, and preparing for conversations with your member. For the full document, click here. Do not hesitate to reach out with questions or requests for help - that is what we are here for!

In other news, in and around DC

Administration Updates

- More than half of the roughly 1,300 layoff notices issued to CDC employees have been rescinded; however, hundreds of positions remain eliminated, including those focused on biodefense, public health data, and mental health. Among those still laid off are analysts who monitor biological, chemical, and nuclear threats, as well as staff coordinating biodefense exercises and tracking cyberattacks on hospitals. While HHS officials defended the layoffs as efforts to eliminate "wasteful and duplicative entities," experts are warning that the loss of biodefense and mental health personnel could undermine the nation's ability to detect and respond to future health threats.
- President Trump issued an executive order on October 15th, giving senior political appointees more control over federal hiring at HHS and other agencies. Agencies must submit annual staffing plans and form Strategic Hiring Committees to align hiring with

administration priorities. Some roles may require applicants to submit essays on how they would support the agenda. Exemptions include positions in immigration, national security, and public safety. The order also restricts filling vacancies and creating new positions, reinforcing current efforts to reduce the federal workforce.

- Starting October 1st, 2025, CMS instructed all Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) to hold claims for 10 business days to avoid large-scale reprocessing of claims and delayed payment. Despite the ongoing government shutdown, CMS has confirmed that Medicare will continue to process and pay most claims on schedule, except for those impacted by the expired provisions. Those expired provisions, or "payment extenders", include payment for telehealth services, the additional payment for certain low-volume hospitals, and additional pay for certain geographic regions of the country.

Health Policy Updates

- 15 Democratic governors announced the creation of the Governors' Public Health Alliance, which aims to strengthen state coordination on disease surveillance, vaccine distribution, and pandemic preparedness amid instability at federal health agencies under HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The Alliance is being created after growing frustration among governors over what they view as politicized guidance and funding cuts from Washington. The Alliance includes advisers from both parties and has invited Republican-led states to participate.

Academy "Funding, Facts, and Follow Up" Emails. Weekly updates and funding opportunities: Click here to access an archive of the weekly emails we send out, including our the most recent.

MEDIA

"As US shutdown drags on, 'it's just one blow after another'"

"NIH Study Sections are on hold…again."

"This 4-year-old's heart is failing. A federal grant that might help him was canceled."

*Thank you for following these Academy updates! If your department, society, or company isn't yet a supporting Member, now is a great time to join. Your support powers our advocacy efforts and helps advance the interests of our entire community.

Discover The Value of the Academy in this short clip and explore our membership [here]. For personalized guidance or questions, connect with Josie Wilkinson Miller at jwilkinson@acadrad.org —we'd love to hear from you!