The ACADEMY for Radiology & Biomedical Imaging Research

Advancing Innovation in Imaging Science

February 13, 2026

Academy Policy & Legislative Update

Dear Academy Friends,

Happy Friday the 13th—I'm hoping it brings more good fortune than superstition suggests. Let's take a look at the latest developments.

NIH Update

This week, HHS and NIH leadership decided not to renew the term of Linsey Criswell, MD, director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, creating another leadership vacancy at the NIH. Dr. Criswell is now being transferred as a principal investigator to the National Human Genome Research Institute.

- 15 out of 27 Institutes and Centers are without permanent leadership.
- NIH Deputy Director Matthew Memoli is overseeing the searches to fill vacant institute director positions.
- There is significant concern regarding how permanent directors will be chosen. Historically, staff scientists and external experts play key roles in selecting IC leadership positions.
- In the language attached to the current appropriations bill moving through Congress, lawmakers direct NIH "to maintain its longstanding practice of including external scientists and stakeholders" in the search process.

The Stories Behind the Science: Best Practices for Communicating Medical Imaging Research to Policymakers

In preparation for Medical Imaging Research Capitol Hill Advocacy Day, this week, Elizabeth (Libby) O'Hare, PhD, the Director of Government Relations at the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) led a workshop on the best way for scientists to frame their conversation with Members of Congress. Click here for a summary and a link to the recording.

Federal Notices

"NIH No Longer Requires Advanced Permission for Conference Grant Applications"

MEDIA

**If you come across an article that you would like us to include in our weekly policy emails, please send it to us, in case we miss any.*

"National Cancer Institute studying ivermectin's 'ability to kill cancer cells,' alarming career scientists"

"How Congress's Budget Could Hamper Trump ED Agenda"

"NIH redefines 'clinical trials,' dividing researchers"

"AI help in grant proposals tied to higher funding odds at NIH"

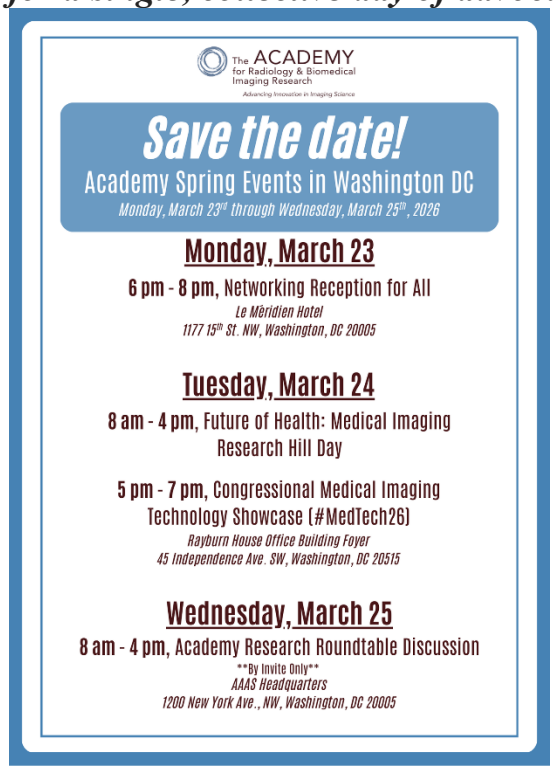
"AAU Report on US Science Global Impact"

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Academy Research Roundtable Discussion will be held on **Wednesday, March 25, 2026**, at the AAAS Headquarters in Washington, DC. The roundtable will convene invited representatives from academia, industry, societies, early-career investigators, and representatives invited from multiple government agencies, including NIH, NIBIB, NCI, NHLBI, NIST, FDA, CMS, HHS, and ARPA-H.

You can view the agenda here.
More information about the Academy Roundtable is available here, and a link to register can be found here.

The Academy is leading a multi-society collaboration among the following imaging societies for a single, collective day of advocacy in Washington, DC, on March 24:



Click here to view the save the date with more event details.

Click here to view the Academy 2026 Spring Events & Meetings website.

Hill Updates

On February 11, the House Energy and Commerce (E&C) Subcommittee on Health **held a hearing** on "Lowering Health Care Costs for All Americans: An Examination of the Prescription Drug Supply Chain." The hearing examined how the prescription drug supply chain affects health care costs, with members discussing issues such as pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) practices, industry consolidation, rural pharmacy access, and drug price transparency. Witnesses representing different segments of the prescription drug supply chain provided testimony on contracting practices, market concentration, and transparency initiatives, offering perspectives intended to inform congressional efforts to reduce costs for patients.

The Senate Special Committee on Aging **held a hearing** on February 11 titled "The Doctor is Out: How Washington's Rule Drove Physicians Out of Medicine." The hearing examined how federal regulations and administrative burdens are contributing to physician burnout, workforce shortages, and reduced access to care, particularly for older Americans and those in rural or underserved areas. In his opening remarks, Chair Rick Scott (R-FL) **emphasized** that excessive paperwork and compliance requirements are forcing doctors to spend more time navigating bureaucracy than caring for patients, creating a cycle of burnout that harms both physicians and patient outcomes. Witnesses—including physicians, health care executives, and an advocacy leader—shared real-world experiences on how these pressures affect medical practice and the doctor-patient relationship.

On February 12, dozens of House Democrats **sent a letter** to HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. urging him remove Dr. Adam Urato and Dr. Kimberly Biss from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), **citing concerns** that the newly appointed OB-GYNs have expressed views inconsistent with evidence-based vaccine science. Lawmakers argued that the appointments could undermine public trust and maternal health outcomes, pointing to established guidance from the CDC and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) supporting vaccination during pregnancy and warning against politicization of routine immunizations.

Administration Updates

On February 6, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued its **final rule** on Schedule Policy/Career, a new employment classification that allows the Trump administration to remove job protections and appeals rights for certain "policy-influencing" federal employees. The **administration says** the rule will increase accountability; however **critics warn** it could accelerate politicization across agencies, including HHS. Additionally, on February 9, OPM released a **proposed rule** to move the appeals process for federal workers contesting layoff decisions from the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) to OPM. The proposed rule **follows through** on a portion of the administration's plans for overhauling the federal government's

reductions-in-force procedures. The regulation seeks to make it easier for federal agencies to downsize their workforce. Comments are due March 12, 2026.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) **released** a **proposed rule** aimed at lowering health care costs, expanding consumer choice, and strengthening program integrity in the Federal and State-Based Health Insurance Exchanges. **Key measures** include promoting innovative plan designs, enhancing verification and enforcement to prevent fraud, clarifying standards for agents and brokers, and improving affordability and transparency for consumers while ensuring taxpayer-funded subsidies are properly used. Comments are due March 13, 2026.

The Trump **administration plans to rescind** about $600 million in public health funding from California, Colorado, Illinois, and Minnesota, citing that the grants are inconsistent with **agency priorities** (New York Times, subscription required). The cuts, administered through the CDC and overseen by the HHS, affect programs supporting public health infrastructure, disease surveillance, and H.I.V. prevention, including funding for state health departments and partner organizations. Public health experts noted concerns that withdrawing congressionally appropriated funds could weaken local preparedness amid ongoing health threats.

On February 11, FDA official Vinay Prasad, head of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER), **overruled agency reviewers** by rejecting Moderna's application for a new influenza vaccine. A team of career scientists were reportedly ready to review Moderna's application, and David Kaslow, the head the vaccine office, had recommended the review. Moderna stated that its mRNA-based vaccine, which showed 27 percent high efficacy than a standard flu shot in trials and raised no safety concerns, had previously followed FDA recommendations, and the company has requested an urgent meeting with CBER. This decision reflects broader vaccine scrutiny under HHS Secretary Kennedy.

Health Policy Updates

The American Medical Association (AMA) and the Vaccine Integrity Project **have launched** a structured, evidence-based review of vaccines for the 2026–27 respiratory virus season, focusing on influenza, COVID-19, and RSV. The initiative will convene expert panels, conduct systematic literature reviews, and provide transparent, publicly accessible evidence briefs to medical societies, helping clinicians develop and disseminate updated, population-specific immunization guidance. This effort builds on the **2025–26 review** and aims to maintain a rigorous, independent process for vaccine safety and effectiveness amid strains on the traditional federal advisory infrastructure.

Academy Membership Programming Survey
We've put together a survey to gauge the interests of our membership so we can provide programming opportunities that you want to participate in. Please complete this survey and leave all feedback you may have. Thank you!

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

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 Olivia Nelson at onelson@acadrad.org —we'd love to hear from you!