Dear NIMH Grantees,

We know that for most of you, the COVID19 pandemic has severely impacted your ability to carry out your important research. You should know that it is our intention to ensure the ultimate success of your projects.

We understand that for many of you, this will mean you need additional flexibilities and/or resources over time to achieve this success. Critically, we also understand that a one-size-fits-all approach towards providing you with these resources is not the answer. In cooperation with our colleagues across the NIH, we are developing a diversified suite of mechanisms and approaches that we hope will address your challenges. Some of these approaches have already been announced (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/natural_disasters/corona-virus.htm; please check often for updates), while others are still in development. Which of these approaches will best help you accomplish the goals of your research project will depend upon your specific situation. Over the next several months, NIMH staff, including grants management specialists and program officers, will make themselves available to discuss your challenges and help you determine the approach that will work best for your project.

Meanwhile we have received a number of inquiries regarding potential applications for administrative supplements, one of the tools that we have to address shortfalls in resources. While we will plan on using administrative supplements when absolutely necessary, it is clear that for the vast majority of grantees, supplement requests in the next 2-3 months would be premature. We therefore recommend that investigators hold off on submitting COVID19-related administrative supplement requests until such time as (1) the full impacts of the pandemic on your research are clear, and (2) you have had the chance to discuss the various options with the relevant NIMH staff and you have agreed that an administrative supplement is the best option for your project.

There are two exceptions and one clarification I would like to stipulate. The exceptions to this recommendation are for (1) supplements to existing projects that will allow investigators to immediately address scientific questions of direct relevance to the COVID19 epidemic, and (2) supplements that are needed to address immediate, mission critical needs over the next 3 months. Investigators
who believe they meet these exceptions should raise these issues with their program officers or grants management specialists prior to submitting such requests. Unless otherwise announced, such requests will be due by May 1, 2020. The clarification is in regard to grants that will end in the next few months; investigators should work with their institutions to process a no-cost extension initially, and NIMH will evaluate subsequent requests for additional flexibilities and/or resources during the extension period.

I hope that all of you are safe and healthy, and I look forward to working with you to ensure the continued progress towards achieving our common mission.

Best,
Josh

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