Local, State, and Federal Agencies: Who They Are and What They Do

Federal Agencies and Divisions

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – HHS is a regulatory agency responsible for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential health and human services. HHS has 11 operating divisions, including eight agencies in the U.S. Public Health Service and three human services agencies. The divisions that IDF typically engage with include the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Service (CMS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Each division consist of centers, offices and institutes that focus on specific functions or areas of oversight. The HHS organizational chart includes links to each agency’s chart showing the breakdown of offices, centers, bureaus and institutes.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) -- CDC is the division charged with protecting public health and safety through the control and prevention of disease, injury, and disability. It focuses its attention on infectious disease, food borne pathogens, environmental health, occupational safety and health, health promotion, injury prevention and educational activities designed to improve the health of United States citizens. Centers that are of interest to the PI community include National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, and Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services.

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) – CMS oversees the Medicare program and coordinates with state governments to administer Medicaid and other health insurance programs and standards. CMS also houses the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO) which is charged with implementing the Affordable Care Act.

- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – FDA is a division within HHS that protects and promotes public health through the regulation of prescription/over-the-counter pharmaceutical drugs, vaccines, biopharmaceuticals, and medical devices. The centers of interest to the PI community include the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) and the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) that focus on policies related to biologics and drug development and approval.

- Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) – HRSA is the primary federal agency for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated or medically vulnerable. It is comprised of six bureaus and thirteen offices including Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and the Office of Health Equity.

- National Institutes of Health (NIH) – NIH is the primary agency of the United States government responsible for biomedical and public health research. The NIH conducts its own scientific research through its Intramural Research Program (IRP) and provides major biomedical research funding to non-NIH research facilities through its Extramural Research Program. Housed within NIH is the National Institute of Infectious Disease, leading research to understand, treat, and prevent
infectious, immunologic, and allergic diseases. Research related to various PI conditions is conducted this division.

State/Local Agencies

- City/County/State Department of Health/Human services – segment of state and local government that focuses on healthcare issues important to the citizens of your city/county/state
- State Health Insurance Commissioner – oversees the regulation of insurance within each state and enforces state insurance laws
- Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committees – manages drug formularies within a state or local healthcare system, primarily used by states to manage their Medicaid formularies.