

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, October 10, 2019

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- 11:45am: President Trump receives intelligence briefing
- 4:10pm: Trump departs White House for Minneapolis
- 8pm: Trump speaks at campaign rally; Target Center, Minneapolis
- 9:30pm: Trump departs Target Center for Washington

CONGRESS

- House, Senate out on recess

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Medicare Eye, Dental, Hearing Coverage Next Front for Democrats:** Democratic leaders in the House are eyeing an expansion of Medicare benefits and ways to cut costs for seniors in the program as part of their drug-pricing legislation. The leaders have asked congressional scorekeepers to look at the cost of giving Medicare beneficiaries vision, dental, and hearing coverage as part of their Medicare negotiation measure (H.R. 3), according to a health-care lobbyist briefed on the issue.
- **Medicaid and CHIP Social Determinants of Health:** Reps. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.) and Gus Bilirakis (D-Fla.) unveiled a measure (H.R. 4621) yesterday that would require HHS to “provide guidance to states to address social determinants of health under Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program,” according to a statement. “Research shows that the conditions where people live, learn, work, and play, also known as the social determinants of health, play an outsized role in health outcomes and cost,” Blunt Rochester, a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said in the statement.
- **Health-Care Worker Violence Rule:** A proposed bill protecting health-care workers from on-the-job violence would cost hospitals, nursing homes, and other facilities at least \$1.35 billion annually to comply, the Congressional Budget Office estimated in a report yesterday. The measure (H.R. 1309), introduced by Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.), seeks to require the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to write a workplace violence prevention rule and issue it within 42 months of the bill becoming law. The Bureau of Labor Statistics last year reported that health-care and social-service workers were nearly five times as likely to be attacked and suffer an injury than workers in other sectors.

- **Pelosi Confronts Decision on Impeachment Vote:** Trump is pushing Pelosi to hold a formal vote on impeachment, a move that would change the politics of the probe more than its legal standing.

 - A decision whether to call the president's bluff is likely to be a main topic when Pelosi convenes a conference call with House Democrats at the end of the week. Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.), one of the leadership's vote counters, said Democrats could easily pass a resolution authorizing the impeachment inquiry with as many as 230 votes.
 - But Gerald Connolly (D-Va.), a member of a committee leading the inquiry, said there are plenty of reasons not to hold that vote. "Caving to their phony demands could -- in an odd way -- have unintended consequences of actually empowering their various arguments," he said of the White House and Republicans. Connolly also pointed to shifting public opinion, as evidenced in polls, in favor of the inquiry even without a House vote.

- **Fox News Poll Shows 51% Want Trump Removed:** A Fox News poll shows that 51% of voters want Trump impeached and removed from office, up from 42% in July. According to the Fox poll published online yesterday, 4% want him impeached but not removed, and 40% don't want him impeached. In addition, 51% of voters said they think the Trump administration is more corrupt than previous administrations, up from 46% in September.

- **Trump Urged Top Aide to Help Giuliani Client:** In a new development, Bloomberg News reports that Trump pressed then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to help persuade the Justice Department to drop a criminal case against an Iranian-Turkish gold trader who was a client of Rudy Giuliani, according to three people familiar with the 2017 meeting in the Oval Office. Tillerson refused, arguing it would constitute interference in an ongoing investigation of the trader, Reza Zarrab, according to the people. They said other participants in the Oval Office were shocked by the request.

 - Tillerson immediately repeated his objections to then-Chief of Staff John Kelly in a hallway conversation just outside the Oval Office, emphasizing that the request would be illegal. Neither episode has been previously reported, and all of the people spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the conversations.

- **Ukrainian President Says There Was No Blackmail:** Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy rejected any suggestions he was blackmailed by Trump during the now infamous phone call. "There was no a blackmail," Zelenskyy told reporters at an all-day press event in Kyiv. "It wasn't a subject of our talk." Zelenskyy said he wasn't aware when he spoke by phone with Trump that the military aid at the center of the scandal had been frozen. He said he discussed the assistance at a later meeting in Warsaw with Vice President Mike Pence.

- Turkey Sanctions Bill Introduced:** Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) introduced a bipartisan measure yesterday to sanction Turkey in response to Trump's decision to pull U.S. troops from northern Syria, which left Kurdish fighters in Syria vulnerable to a Turkish invasion. Graham is partnering with Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) on a bill that would trigger sanctions unless the Trump administration "certifies to Congress – every 90 days" that Turkey is not operating in Syrian territory. Turkish ground forces invaded Syria yesterday.

 - The sanctions would target Turkish leaders including the president, vice president and ministers of defense, finance, trade and energy, as well as any foreign national who provides support to the Turkish military. The measure would also prohibit foreign entities from supporting Turkish energy production used by its armed forces and would require a report on Turkish President Recep Erdogan's net worth.
 - U.S. lawmakers of both parties strongly opposed Trump's decision to pull U.S. troops back from Syria's border where they were supporting Kurdish allies:
 - Senate Armed Services Chairman Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) said that Turkey's "unilateral military intervention in Syria is unacceptable," while ranking member Jack Reed (D-R.I.) said that Trump's decision to "acquiesce" to Erdogan is "absolutely horrible," urging Defense Secretary Mark Esper to testify to Congress. "The blood of our partners in the fight against ISIS will be on President Trump's hands," Reed said.
 - In the House, Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.), a member of Republican leadership, called the withdrawal a "catastrophic" mistake. "Impossible to understand why @realDonaldTrump is leaving America's allies to be slaughtered and enabling the return of ISIS," she tweeted. House Foreign Affairs Committee ranking member Michael McCaul (R-Texas) said "the scene unfolding in Syria" is "unacceptable" and that he's "working with my colleagues in the House to address this dynamic situation in a bipartisan way."
- Georgia Is Suddenly in Play for Democrats:** Republicans have had a hammerlock on Georgia for a generation. It could slip away – if Democrats decide to make it a fight. The state is a must-win for Trump. Republicans are defending two U.S. Senate seats that may swing control of the chamber. Democrats remain underdogs, but population growth in the diverse and booming Atlanta area, along with the exodus of educated women from the GOP, have made them competitive in a state they've carried just once since 1980.

 - The Democratic National Committee announced this week it would hold the fifth presidential debate in Georgia. Party spokesman David Bergstein proclaimed that Georgia is "a defensive liability for Republicans and it's rapidly emerging as a battleground state."
- Sanders's Heart Attack Puts Him in Uncharted Territory:** Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) has so far muscled past questions about his age by keeping a grueling campaign schedule, bouncing between ice cream socials, private meetings, rallies or town halls in a single day -- with aides decades his junior struggling to keep up. But the 78-year-old's heart attack last week hinders a candidacy already faltering as Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-

Mass.), his rival for the progressive mantle, edges into a statistical tie for frontrunner status in the Democratic presidential race. His campaign is now facing an acute dilemma without precedent in modern American politics. No candidate has experienced and disclosed a potentially life-threatening health incident while running for a major party's White House nomination.

- **Booker Proposes New Rights for College Athletes:** Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) wants to use the power of the presidency to ensure that college and professional athletes are “free from exploitation and harm.” Under Booker’s plan, college athletes could be paid for the rights to their name, image or likenesses. Last week, California became the first state to allow college athletes to receive payment for playing. Booker played on Stanford University’s football team as an undergraduate.
- **Biden Jabs at Warren:** Seeking to draw a contrast with Warren, Joe Biden said yesterday that the country is “not electing a planner.” Warren, who is statistically tied with Biden in recent state and national polls, has released a flurry of policy proposals, a practice that has developed into a campaign slogan: “Warren’s got a plan for that.” For the most part, Biden has refrained from criticizing his rivals, but his rebuke of Warren may signal a more aggressive approach as he seeks to regain his lead in the polls. “More important than my plan is my promise: I will get this done,” Biden said in New Hampshire.
- **Trump Would Win Based on Economy:** If the 2020 election is decided on the economy, historic trends suggest that Trump would win by 5 percentage points, according to an analysis by the economic forecasting firm Oxford Economics. “A record-low unemployment rate, subdued inflation and only moderately cooler income growth will favor the incumbent party despite some party fatigue,” the analysis says. Trump could even survive a slight downturn, it concludes. Oxford Economics reached that conclusion based on a model by Yale University’s Ray Fair, who’s studied the economic factors that best predict presidential elections dating to 1916. But the analysis carries a big caveat: “Non-economic factors are likely to play an outsized role in this election.”
- **U.S. Weighs Currency Pact With China:** The White House is looking at rolling out a previously agreed currency pact with China as part of an early harvest deal that could also see a tariff increase next week suspended, according to people familiar with the discussions. The currency accord, which the U.S. said had been agreed to earlier this year before trade talks broke down, would be part of what the White House considers to be a first-phase agreement with Beijing. It would be followed by more negotiations on core issues like intellectual property and forced technology transfers, the people said.
- **Europe Says It’s Ready for a Trade War:** France’s finance minister said he doesn’t want the European Union to become the latest front in the global trade war, but that the bloc would hit the U.S. with sanctions if a settlement isn’t reached in a long-running dispute over aircraft aid. “We are all aware of the dramatic consequences of this trade war between China and the U.S. on the level of growth,” minister Bruno Le Maire told

reporters in Luxembourg on today. “Do we really want to add a trade war between the U.S. and Europe to the Chinese and American trade war?”

- **Trump Says He’ll Look Into U.K. Car Incident:** Trump said he would “see what we can come up with” to mollify anger in the U.K. over an American woman with diplomatic immunity who killed a motorcyclist in a car accident. U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson pressed Trump in a call yesterday to waive the woman’s immunity and make her return to Britain to face justice, his office said in a statement. “We’re going to speak to her, the person driving the car,” Trump told reporters at the White House. “We’re going to speak to her and see what they can come up with so there can be some healing.”
- **Trump Orders Limit Effect of Agency Guidance:** Trump signed a pair of executive orders intended to reduce the impact of agency guidance the White House believes has become a back-door means of regulation. Industries often seek guidance from agencies to help them comply with complex rules. These agency policy statements – memorandums, circulars, bulletins, and letters – aren’t legally binding but often can serve as the basis for enforcement. Critics view such guidance as an improper shortcut around formal rulemaking. The new limits on guidance could have a broad, if uncertain, effect across multiple agencies that routinely use guidance and other documents to provide clarity to industry.
- **EPA to Unveil New National Lead-in-Water Standards:** The Environmental Protection Agency will unveil the first updates to its regulations on lead in drinking water in nearly three decades at an Oct. 10 event in Green Bay, Wis., according to a person invited to attend the event. EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler is scheduled to attend the event, along with David Ross, the agency’s top water official, and Cathy Stepp, the head of its Midwestern regional office. The agency’s lead regulations, officially known as the Lead and Copper Rule, went into effect in 1991 and haven’t been substantially updated since then.
- **Trump Taps Ex-Industry Attorney to OSHA Panel:** Trump nominated Amanda Wood Laihow to be a member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for a six-year term expiring April 27, 2023. The commission weighs in on disputes between regulators and companies on Occupational Safety and Health Administration citations and the appropriateness of civil penalties assessed for health and safety issues. Laihow currently serves as the chief counsel to OSHRC Chairman James J. Sullivan Jr., who is currently the only member of the three-member panel.
- **Amazon’s Carney Blasts White House:** Amazon’s top spokesman Jay Carney criticized the Trump administration yesterday, questioning the patriotism and honesty of the current White House and criticizing it for trying to influence the Federal Reserve. In a 30-minute interview at the GeekWire Summit in Seattle, Carney drew distinctions between the current administration and those of former Presidents Barack Obama,

George Bush and Bill Clinton. Carney used to be Obama's press secretary and worked as a political reporter before that.

- "Virtually with no exception, everyone I dealt with in those administrations, whether I personally agreed or disagreed with what they thought were the right policy decisions or the right way to approach things, I never doubted that they were patriots," he said. "I don't feel that way now." Carney also said he never lied on behalf of the White House and "there doesn't seem to be that standard today."