

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, October 29, 2020

The following information comes from directly from news sources including Bloomberg Government, Kaiser Health News, and other news sources.

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- 1:35pm: President Trump holds campaign rally in Tampa, Fla.
- 5:15pm: Trump, First Lady Melania Trump participate in Troop Engagement event at Fort Bragg in N.C.
- 6:30pm: Trump holds rally in Fayetteville, N.C.
- VP Mike Pence holds rallies in Des Moines, Iowa and Reno, Nevada

CONGRESS

- House, Senate out

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Grassley Furthers Probe on Organ Transplants:** Senate Finance Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and ranking member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) sent a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar concerning the “oversight procedures for the organ procurement and transplantation system in the United States,” part the Finance Committee’s probe “into the conduct of the nation’s organ donation and procurement system.” The letter cites several inspector general audits and news reports “about the adequacy of patient safety standards.”
- **Bloomberg Government: Pelosi Letter to Mnuchin Lists Unsolved Stimulus Areas:** Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in a letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said she’s still awaiting the Trump administration’s promised responses on multiple items. Pelosi says still hasn’t received a final answer on new compromise language regarding a strategy for testing, tracing and treatment of the coronavirus. She also seeks an answer on language on vaccines, the provider fund and Affordable Care Act coverage for unemployed workers. Other areas awaiting responses include state and local aid, child care, earned income tax credit and child tax credit, unemployment insurance, school funding and OSHA liability matters, Pelosi said.
- **Bloomberg Government: SBA May Have Misspent Billions, Watchdog Says:** Meanwhile, a Small Business Administration program meant to help struggling entrepreneurs amid the coronavirus pandemic may have sent billions of dollars to scammers or ineligible applicants, the agency’s inspector general said. In a report released yesterday, Inspector General Hannibal “Mike” Ware portrayed the agency’s \$212 billion Economic Injury Disaster Loan program as chaotic and vulnerable to fraud. He disclosed that \$450 million in doubtful payments have already been seized by law enforcement and identified tens of billions more that he said required further investigation.

- **The Hill: Fauci: COVID-19 Vaccine Likely Not Available Until Next Year:** A potential COVID-19 vaccine will not likely be available until next year, Anthony Fauci said Wednesday. During a virtual Q&A with the editor in chief of the medical journal JAMA, Fauci said companies by December will likely have enough data for the independent safety monitoring board to recommend applying for emergency authorization, but the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may not grant that authorization until January at the earliest.
- **The Hill: Medicare, Medicaid Will Cover Costs Of Future COVID-19 Vaccine Under New Policy:** Medicare will cover any potential coronavirus vaccine for free, under a new Trump administration policy officially announced Wednesday. The new rule from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) means any vaccine that receives Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorization will be covered under Medicare as a preventive vaccine at no cost to beneficiaries, which is a change from current policy.
- **CIDRAP: PPE Still Lacking In Nursing Homes As COVID Doubles Down:** Two new studies detail US nursing home preparedness amid the COVID-19 pandemic, one finding that 20% of facilities had less than 1 week's supply of at least one type of personal protective equipment (PPE), and the other showing that homes owned by private equity firms performed on par with those under other types of ownership in terms of coronavirus cases and deaths but stored less PPE.