

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, November 13, 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

- President Trump has no public events scheduled; receives update on Operation Warp Speed at noon in Oval Office

CONGRESS

- House, Senate out
- 10:45am: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi holds weekly press conference

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Obamacare Skirmishes Await Regardless of Ruling:** The fight over Obamacare will likely continue even if the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the constitutionality of the country's signature health-care law for a second time. Despite its newly strengthened conservative majority, the court signaled Nov. 10 it's inclined to let the Affordable Care Act live on with or without the individual mandate that requires everyone to buy health insurance. That ruling won't stop opponents from trying to tear down the law, but it could deter another broadside legal attack, some health law scholars say.
 - Meanwhile, in the first week of Obamacare enrollment for 2021, more than 800,000 people signed up for health plans on the federal HealthCare.gov platform, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced Thursday.
- **Bloomberg Government: Fauci Says End to Pandemic is in Sight:** Even as Covid-19 rages, the virus won't be a pandemic for "a lot longer" thanks to rapid progress in vaccine development, according to Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious diseases expert. The disease could nonetheless circulate for years, and people need to recommit to inexpensive public health measures like wearing masks, washing hands and social distancing as cases surge, the director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said at an event yesterday.
- **KHN: Clots, Strokes And Rashes: Is COVID A Disease Of The Blood Vessels?:** Whether it's strange rashes on the toes or blood clots in the brain, the widespread ravages of COVID-19 have increasingly led researchers to focus on how the novel coronavirus sabotages blood vessels. As scientists have come to know the disease better, they have homed in on the vascular system – the body's network of arteries, veins and capillaries, stretching more than 60,000 miles – to understand this wide-ranging disease and to find treatments that can stymie its most pernicious effects.

- **AP: Biden Has Room On Health Care, Though Limited By Congress:** President-elect Joe Biden is unlikely to get sweeping health care changes through a closely divided Congress, but there's a menu of narrower actions he can choose from to make a tangible difference on affordability and coverage for millions of people. With the balance of power in the Senate hinging on a couple of Georgia races headed to a runoff, and Democrats losing seats in the House, Biden's proposals for a public health insurance option and empowering Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices seem out of reach. Those would be tough fights even if Democrats controlled Congress with votes to spare.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Biden's Pentant For Bold Stimulus To Test His Deal-Making Skills:** When Joe Biden takes office in January, a main focus will be continuing to pull the country out of the economic hole caused by the pandemic. He has been there before, running the Obama administration's recovery plan as vice president. The priorities Mr. Biden touted during the financial crisis 12 years ago, and the lessons his team learned from that downturn, offer clues to how he'll handle this one.
- **NPR: Even With Health Insurance, Many Americans Still Struggle With High Health Costs:** When it comes to worries about high health care costs, having health insurance doesn't necessarily spare you, according to a study recently published in JAMA. Despite the gains in insurance coverage brought by the Affordable Care Act, high health care costs continue to plague many Americans, researchers found. Around 11 million Americans experienced "catastrophic medical expenses" in 2017, the last year the study covered — and privately insured people represented more than half of those.