

# 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

- 12:30pm: Trump has lunch with Vice President Mike Pence
- 2pm: Pence leads governors' video teleconference on COVID-19 response

### CONGRESS

- House meets at 2pm; first vote expected 6:30pm, last vote at 7:30pm
  - Will consider eight bills under suspension of the rules
- Senate meets at 3pm
  - To resume consideration of nomination of Kristi Johnson to be a judge for the Southern District of Mississippi
- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has called again for negotiations with Republicans on a fiscal-stimulus package as both chambers focus on passing spending bills to avert a government shutdown next month

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **KHN: Red States' Case Against ACA Hinges On Whether They Were Actually Harmed By The Law:** Attorneys for GOP-controlled states seeking to kill the Affordable Care Act told the Supreme Court last week that at least some of the 12 million people who newly enrolled in Medicaid signed up only because of the law's requirement that people have insurance coverage — although a tax penalty no longer exists. The statement drew a rebuke from Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who said it belies reason. Several health experts also questioned the argument that poor people apply for Medicaid not because they need help getting health care but to meet the ACA's individual mandate for coverage.
- **Politico: 20 Million Americans Could Receive Covid-19 Vaccine In December:** Roughly 20 million people could be vaccinated against the coronavirus in December, the head of the Trump administration's vaccine and drug accelerator said Friday. Americans can expect that about 25 to 30 million people could be vaccinated each month afterward, said Moncef Slaoui, co-lead of Operation Warp Speed, during a Rose Garden event with President Donald Trump and other top health officials.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden's Aides Say Lockdown Not on Agenda:** Two of Biden's coronavirus advisers said they favor targeted local measures to stem the pandemic and oppose a nationwide U.S. lockdown as too blunt. Vivek Murthy, a former U.S. surgeon general who's one of Biden's leading three advisers on the virus, said that based upon what the nation has learned about Covid-19 since the spring, the preferred approach of fighting the disease is "a dial that we turn up and down depending on severity." A

nationwide lockdown would exacerbate “pandemic fatigue,” which would undermine federal virus efforts, he said.

- **Bloomberg Government: Trump Pushes for ‘Big and Focused’ Stimulus Bill:** Trump renewed a push for lawmakers to proceed with fresh stimulus to sustain the country’s recovery. “Congress must now do a Covid Relief Bill,” Trump tweeted Saturday, without offering details. “Make it big and focused. Get it done!” But after Trump lost the presidential election to Biden, his administration appeared to step back from negotiations on a new stimulus this week, leaving it to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) to revitalize long-stalled talks with Pelosi.
- **Bloomberg Government: U.S. Tops 11 Million Cases:** The U.S. surpassed 11 million coronavirus cases yesterday as Florida reported the most new infections since July and California reached a three-month high. In a respite for New Yorkers, the city’s public schools will remain open today, even as New Jersey counted record Covid-19 cases for the second straight day. Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D) announced a three-week partial lockdown for her state.
  - The nationwide surge of the coronavirus threatens to overwhelm America’s medical workforce. Prior waves of the pandemic were geographically concentrated: the Northeast in the spring, then the Sun Belt over the summer. Today’s cases and hospitalizations are widespread, increasing in 49 states over the past week. One-in-5,000 Americans is currently hospitalized with the disease, the most ever in data aggregated by the Covid Tracking Project. Without enough workers to care for the sick, hospitals will face brutal triage decisions about which patients can be saved.
- **Bloomberg Government: Loeffler Pushes Health-Care Modernization Bill:** Sen. Kelly Loeffler (R-Ga.), facing a January runoff for her Senate seat, introduced a sweeping health care bill that encapsulates much of Trump’s health agenda. The Modernizing Americans’ Health Care Plan would create a trade representative focused on advocating for the U.S. medical supply chain and to combat “foreign freeloaders” on drug pricing, a nod toward how Trump talks about the issue. The bill would also codify a Trump-administration regulation expanding the availability of short-term health plans and try to shift more manufacturing of medical products to the U.S.
  - Also like Trump, Loeffler contrasted her vision of health care with that of Democrats, who’ve largely tried to build on the Affordable Care Act and kill much of Trump’s health regulations. “The Left wants to socialize our nation’s health care, turning it into a government-run system that would limit choice, lower the quality of care and take away private health insurance from roughly 180 million Americans,” she said in a statement, Alex Ruoff reports.
- **Modern Healthcare: COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration Set To Expire On Inauguration Day:** An HHS COVID-19 public health emergency declaration tied to regulatory flexibilities and funding for healthcare providers is set to expire on Inauguration Day. A drawn-out vote count and the lack of a concession from President Donald Trump has slowed the transition process for President-elect Joe Biden’s team. Stakeholders and public health experts say the emergency declaration will likely still be necessary as case numbers are trending upward and potential vaccine distribution is on the horizon.

- **FierceHealthcare: CMS: More Than 800K Signed Up For ACA Plans On HealthCare.Gov On First Week Of Open Enrollment:** The first week of 2021 open enrollment on the Affordable Care Act's exchanges saw 818,365 people sign up on HealthCare.gov. The robust start to open enrollment, which began on Nov. 1, comes even during a presidential election.