

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, November 19, 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
- VP Mike Pence leads coronavirus task force meeting at 2:30pm

### CONGRESS

- Senate returns Nov. 30
- House meets at 10am with first votes expected between 1pm-2pm; set to consider H.R. 8294, the National Apprenticeship Act

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The Hill: Health Officials Say Every State Will Have COVID Vaccine Doses Within 24 Hours After FDA Green Light:** Federal health officials on Wednesday expressed confidence that every state will have access to at least some doses of a COVID-19 vaccine for distribution within 24 hours after authorization. "Every jurisdiction will have access immediately upon the initial push of the vaccine," Gen. Gustavo Perna, chief operating officer of the Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed, said during a call with reporters.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Urges GSA to Let Transition Begin for Virus Efforts:** President-elect Joe Biden said the General Services Administration's delay in allowing the official presidential transition to begin could set back the nation's effort to distribute a coronavirus vaccine by weeks or months. "We've been unable to get access to the kinds of things we need to know about – the depth of the stockpiles, we know there's not much at all," Biden said in a virtual meeting yesterday with front-line health workers, adding that his team doesn't know the White House's plan for vaccine distribution.
- **Bloomberg Government: Trump Set to Announce New Drug-Pricing Rule:** Trump is set to announce a plan as soon as this week to tie U.S. government payments for drugs to lower prices paid overseas, according to a Politico report. Senior officials worked this weekend to develop an "interim final rule" that could bypass a typically months-long process of releasing a draft and seeking public feedback, Politico reports. Trump resurrected the plan after railing against Pfizer last week for releasing its vaccine data after the election, Politico said.
- **KHN: Surprise Federal Drug Rule Directs Insurers To Reveal What They Pay For Prescription Drugs:** Health insurance companies will have to give their customers estimated out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs and disclose to the public the negotiated prices they pay for drugs, under an unexpected new Trump administration rule. The administration said those requirements, part of a broader rule issued Oct. 29

forcing health plans to disclose costs and payments for most health care services, will promote competition and empower consumers to make better medical decisions.

- **Stat: House Passes Bill To Close Loophole Giving Drug Makers 'Unfair' Monopolies:** Seeking to boost competition in the pharmaceutical industry, the House passed a bill that would close a loophole in a law that was meant to encourage development of rare disease drugs, but that had inadvertently precluded availability of lower-cost versions of medicines. The legislation was proposed last year after a company complained that it was unable to win approval from the Food and Drug Administration to sell an opioid addiction treatment because of a stipulation in the Orphan Drug Act.
- **Bloomberg Government: Democrats Add Billions in PPE to Relief Talks:** Senate Democrats yesterday demanded that any pandemic relief bill passed in response to the worsening Covid-19 pandemic includes \$11 billion for buying and creating more personal protective equipment for health-care workers. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) laid out the demands on the floor, asking for legislation to invoke the Defense Production Act to bolster domestic production of masks, gloves and other equipment for health-care providers. He said that any relief package must include \$10 billion to restock the national stockpile of medical supplies, plus another \$1 billion to help small businesses retool domestic facilities to produce the gear.
  - Senate Majority Whip John Thune (R-S.D.) said funding for protective equipment is supported by Republicans but his party supports “targeted” relief and not a “liberal wish list,” referring to the House-passed “HEROES Act” (H.R. 6800). Meanwhile, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, once a lead negotiator on a coronavirus stimulus package, said yesterday it’s up to Congress to proceed with those talks, even though the issue has been a “priority” for President Donald Trump.
  - “Obviously those discussions – if they happen – will be dictated by the House and the Senate,” Meadows told reporters when asked about stimulus negotiations after a meeting with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). “We haven’t seen a real willingness by our House colleagues to look at that.”