

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Monday, December 21, 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
- 11:30am: Vice President Mike Pence leads teleconference with higher education chancellors and presidents
- 2pm: Pence holds a White House Coronavirus Task Force meeting
- 2:30pm: Pence leads governors teleconference on Covid-19 response and recovery

CONGRESS

- House meets at 9am; first votes no earlier than 10am
- Senate meets at noon
- Both chambers are expected to vote on a bill comprising a \$900 billion coronavirus relief plan and a \$1.4 trillion spending package that would fund the federal government through the end of the fiscal year
 - Follows agreement reached Sunday on a stimulus plan to bolster the U.S. economy amid the continued pandemic
 - Trump signed a one-day temporary extension of government funding passed Sunday by the House and Senate to avoid a partial shutdown before the spending bill is voted on and signed into law

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: What's in the Omnibus Spending Bill:** The House and Senate are set to vote today on a roughly \$900 billion pandemic relief bill that would be the second-biggest economic rescue measure in the nation's history. The aid package will be attached to a \$1.4 trillion measure to fund government operations through the end of the fiscal year, and congressional leaders said they expect the legislation to easily pass both chambers. The White House said President Donald Trump would sign it.
 - Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) announced the accord yesterday. The deal followed more than a week of furious negotiations sparked by a group of Democratic and Republican senators who drew up their own compromise proposal and urged their leaders to act.
 - It also came at the last possible moment for Congress to act before lawmakers are set to leave Washington for their year-end break. Both chambers passed, and President Donald Trump signed, a one-day stopgap measure last night. Lawmakers have until midnight to release the text of the deal, secure agreement, and pass the roughly \$2.3 trillion measure to avoid a government shutdown. Alternatively, they could pass another short-term funding measure.

- Some details of the omnibus spending bill have been detailed in a summary. Lawmakers settled on nearly \$1.4 billion for border wall construction, according to the summary. The bill also sticks to the spending caps imposed in 2019, rather than creating exceptions for coronavirus aid or veterans' health funds. The bill includes help for small businesses, the jobless and direct payments to most Americans. It also provides funding for vaccine distribution, food assistance, tax breaks and money for education and child care.
- **The Hill: Surprise Medical Bill Prevention Included In Year-End Legislative Package:** Bipartisan legislation to protect patients from getting massive "surprise" medical bills is included in a year-end package deal reached Sunday, clearing the way for the measure to pass Congress after almost two years of negotiations. The legislation will protect patients from getting medical bills for thousands of dollars in common situations like going to the emergency room and getting care from a doctor who happened to not be covered by the patient's insurance plan.
- **Bloomberg Government: Insulin, Epinephrine Discount Rule Clears Review:** A rule tying health center federal grant money to patient discounts for insulin and epinephrine could be published at any time, after the White House concluded its review last week. A sign-off by the Office of Management and Budget is the final step before the rule is published in the Federal Register. The final rule is a result of an executive order President Donald Trump signed earlier this year on access to affordable life-saving medicines.
- **Stat: FDA Grants Authorization To Moderna's Covid-19 Vaccine:** And now there are two. The Food and Drug Administration on Friday issued an emergency authorization for a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Moderna, the second such vaccine to be cleared in the United States. Inoculations should begin within days, as was the case following last week's authorization of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech.