

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Tuesday, December 22, 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

- Trump has no public events scheduled
- 9:15am: Vice President Mike Pence departs Washington, D.C. en route for West Palm Beach, Fla.
- Noon: Pence makes remarks at Turning Point USA’s Student Action Summit; West Palm Beach
- 1:45pm: Departs West Palm Beach for Washington, D.C.

CONGRESS

- House on recess
- Senate on recess, convenes for pro forma session on Thursday

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Congress Passes Virus Relief, Federal Funding:** Congress last night passed the second-biggest economic rescue package in U.S. history as part of a massive year-end spending bill. In addition to funding government operations for the rest of the fiscal year, the legislation will provide aid for small businesses, supplemental unemployment benefits and \$600 stimulus payments to most Americans and their children starting as soon as next week. It also includes money for schools, airlines and for distribution of vaccines.
 - The Senate followed the House late last night in passing by overwhelming margins the \$2.3 trillion bill, just hours after lawmakers got their first look at the 5,593 pages of text. The White House has said Trump will sign it. Trump earlier signed a seven-day government spending bill, averting a federal shutdown as the White House awaits formal paperwork on the full bill from Congress.
- **Bloomberg Government: Full-Year Funding:** The National Institutes of Health would get \$42.9 billion, a \$1.25 billion increase from fiscal 2020. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would get \$7.9 billion, a \$125 million boost from fiscal 2020. The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority would get \$597 million, and the National Strategic Stockpile would get an additional \$705 million in fiscal 2021.
 - The measure also would extend a number of health programs through fiscal 2023, including for community health centers, the National Health Service Corps, the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Program, and several diabetes programs.
- **Bloomberg Government: Surprise Billing Fix:** The package includes a separate fix for “surprise” medical bills, which patients can receive when they unexpectedly get out-of-

network services in an emergency or for ancillary services such as anesthesia and radiology that they didn't know were not part of their insurance plan.

- **Bloomberg Government: Drugmakers Win Wiggle Room for Medicaid Contracts:** Drug companies should soon have an easier time entering into contracts purporting the "value" of a drug due to a Medicaid policy released yesterday by the Trump administration. The policy from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is intended to encourage contracts where states can get a partial refund on a drug if it doesn't work. Those sorts of contracts can save states money on expensive products.
- **Fox News: Surgeon General Calls On Coronavirus Survivors To Donate Convalescent Plasma:** The U.S. surgeon general is calling on Americans who have recovered from coronavirus to donate plasma in order to help those who are still battling the illness. Surgeon General Jerome Adams said current ongoing research shows that convalescent plasma is "safe and, when it's given early and contains a high concentration of antibodies, it can help improve a patient's chance of recovery." "If you are among the millions of Americans who have had COVID-19, you may have a precious resource that can help save other lives," Adams said, in a statement released Monday. "Plasma donated by people who have recovered from COVID-19 may contain antibodies to the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the disease. These antibodies may help suppress the virus and provide patients with clinical benefit."
- **The Hill: More Than 150 California Children Have Been Diagnosed With Coronavirus-Related Syndrome:** More than 150 California children have been diagnosed with a coronavirus-related multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) throughout the pandemic. The state Department of Public Health has reported that as of Dec. 14, at least 152 children have been diagnosed with MIS-C, a rare and sometimes deadly inflammatory illness that scientists believe can infect children who have been exposed to the coronavirus.
- **Philadelphia Inquirer: The Coronavirus Pandemic Is Killing People With Diabetes Or Alzheimer's Who Didn't Even Contract The Virus:** The coronavirus has so far killed about 325,000 people in this country, but that staggering toll does not include the multitudes who have died because of disruptions, isolation, and destitution related to the pandemic. People with diabetes or Alzheimer's disease are particularly vulnerable. An Inquirer analysis of federal data found that from mid-March through November, Pennsylvania had 753 more deaths attributed to Alzheimer's and diabetes than would be expected based on the last four years, a 14% increase for each cause. In New Jersey, there were 634 more deaths than expected for the two causes, an increase of 11% for Alzheimer's and 33% for diabetes.