

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, December 4, 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
- 9:25am: Vice President Mike Pence departs Washington for Marietta, Ga.
- 11:50am: Pence meets with CDC's Emergency Operations Center personnel; Atlanta
 - Noon: Leads roundtable discussion on vaccine progress and upcoming distribution
- 3pm: Makes remarks at campaign rally for Georgia's two Senate runoffs; Savannah
- 4:20pm: Departs for Washington, D.C.

CONGRESS

- House meets at 9am; first vote from 10:30am
 - Chamber will vote on H.R. 3884, a bill that would legalize marijuana and remove it from federal drug schedules
- Senate returns Monday
- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi delivers remarks to International LGBTQ Leaders Conference; after 12pm
- A bipartisan stimulus proposal endorsed by Democratic leaders as basis for talks is luring interest from Republicans, raising the chances for a deal

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Reins In Guidance Use After High Court Decision:** All guidance documents from HHS will no longer impose binding legal obligations without a notice-and-comment period, a rule made final yesterday. HHS can still publish legally binding "significant" guidance, but it would have to do so through a notice-and-comment period. A guidance would be viewed as significant if it has an annual effect of at least \$100 million on the economy, a senior agency official told reporters.
- **The Washington Post: Biden Picks Murthy As Surgeon General, Wants Fauci To Stay On:** President-elect Joe Biden has selected a close adviser to help lead the nation's response to the coronavirus crisis, tapping a veteran of the Obama administration to serve as America's top doctor as the country suffers from a surging pandemic. Vivek H. Murthy, a former U.S. surgeon general, has been asked to reprise the role in an expanded version in the new administration, according to an individual familiar with the decision.
- **Modern Healthcare: HHS Boosts Telehealth Across State Lines, COVID-19 Liability Protection:** The Trump administration on Thursday increased access to COVID-19 telehealth services and made it easier for providers to get liability protection for

coronavirus-related medical countermeasures. HHS allowed healthcare professionals using telehealth to order COVID-19 diagnostic testing and other countermeasures for patients outside the state where they're already allowed to practice. According to the department, HHS' new policy overrides any state law that bans, or effectively bans, out-of-state healthcare professionals from delivering coronavirus-related medical countermeasures.

- **Bloomberg Government: IRS Pressed to Resolve Stimulus Check Issues:** Two top House Ways and Means Democrats want the IRS to resolve outstanding issues with economic impact payments by the end of the year. Chairman Richard Neal (D-Mass.) and Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.), chairman of the Ways and Means Oversight Subcommittee, urged IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig to keep open an EIP mailbox, used to submit inquiries from constituents, until the next filing season.
- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Secretary Hunt Hits Reset:** Biden's hunt for a health secretary is poised for a reset after one governor publicly took herself out of the running and another was said to have tested the patience of the president-elect's advisers. The flurry of developments yesterday left no apparent front-runner for the position, which will carry particular weight for Biden as he pledges to curb the raging pandemic and smoothly distribute a vaccine. The top candidates to lead the Department of Health and Human Services were said to have included New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo and Vivek Murthy, a co-chairman of Biden's coronavirus advisory board.
 - The Biden camp has picked Murthy for surgeon general, a role that would be expanded to include helping to manage the U.S. government response to the coronavirus, according to people familiar with the process. Lujan Grisham was offered the role of Interior secretary but turned it down and said she was more passionate about leading HHS, a person close to the transition said. Raimondo, meanwhile, announced she didn't want the job.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden's Medicaid Push to Make States Get Creative:** Food security, affordable housing, and other social needs could become a focus of the Biden administration as it works with states to shore up health coverage for low-income people. The new HHS will likely encourage states to expand Medicaid eligibility, while also using the program to offer non-medical benefits aimed at improving enrollees' overall health, according to policy analysts.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Says He'll Ask for Mask-Wearing for 100 Days:** Biden said he would ask all Americans to wear a mask to prevent the spread of the coronavirus for the first 100 days as president, as well as issue a "standing order" requiring face coverings in federal buildings and on interstate transportation. He said he would order masks "where the federal government has authority."