

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Wednesday, May 20, 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

- 11:45am: President Trump receives intelligence briefing
- 12:30pm: Trump holds conference call with national Hispanic community
- 4pm: Trump meets with governors of Arkansas, Kansas
- 3pm: Press Sec. Kayleigh McEnany holds briefing

CONGRESS

- Senate meets at 10am; to consider judicial nominations

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The Wall Street Journal: States Step Up Reopenings, Hoping To Limit Economic Damage:** U.S. states and governments around the world are trying to revive their economies after months of shutdowns, as they take tentative steps to ease restrictions imposed to combat the spread of the coronavirus. State governments in the U.S. estimate the collective expense of fighting the pandemic at some \$45 billion, which most want the federal government to repay in full, rather than be reimbursed at the 75% rate allowed under the law, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said.
- **Reuters: Republican Senators Put Brakes On Additional Coronavirus Aid:** Republican leaders in the U.S. Congress said on Tuesday they were in no hurry to work on another coronavirus relief package, despite the House of Representatives' passage last week of a \$3 trillion measure. "We need to assess what we've already done, take a look at what worked and what didn't work, and we'll discuss the way forward in the next couple of weeks," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told reporters after President Donald Trump spoke to a Senate Republican luncheon.
- **The Wall Street Journal: U.S.-China Tensions Rise As Trump Accuses WHO Of Pro-China Bias:** President Trump's threat to cut off funding to the World Health Organization and revoke U.S. membership over the group's handling of the coronavirus heightened tensions with China and sparked a new round of accusations between the two countries. In a four-page letter to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Monday, Mr. Trump said the organization had shown an "alarming lack of independence" from Beijing and failed to adequately respond as Chinese government officials sought to cover up the emerging health threat.
- **Stat: Vaccine Experts Say Moderna's Covid-19 Data Leave Big Questions:** Heavy hearts soared Monday with news that Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine candidate – the frontrunner in the American market – seemed to be generating an immune response in Phase 1 trial subjects. The company's stock valuation also surged, hitting \$29 billion, an astonishing feat

for a company that currently sells zero products. But was there good reason for so much enthusiasm? Several vaccine experts asked by STAT concluded that, based on the information made available by the Cambridge, Mass.-based company, there's really no way to know how impressive – or not – the vaccine may be.

- **Stat: FDA Will Seek To Collect 'Real-World' Data On Covid-19:** The Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday that it will launch a new research project focused on real-world evidence – data collected by insurance companies, in electronic health records, and in other places in medicine – to learn more about Covid-19, including how diagnostics and medications are being used in the pandemic and how best to design studies to test them. The project is a collaboration with Aetion, a New York health tech startup that specializes in real-world evidence.
- **The Washington Post: CDC Releases Reopening Guidelines For Schools, Child-Care Centers, Restaurants, Mass Transit:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this week laid out its detailed, delayed road map for reopening schools, child-care facilities, restaurants and mass transit, weeks after covid-weary states began opening on their own terms. The CDC cautioned that some institutions should stay closed for now and said reopening should be guided by coronavirus transmission rates.
- **Bloomberg Government: Millions Spent to Prevent Drug Shortages:** Trump yesterday awarded a \$354 million contract to a group led by Virginia-based drugmaker Phlow Corp. to help boost domestic manufacturing of medications at risk of shortage. The four year-contract, from the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, could be extended up to 10 years and total as much as \$812 million, according to a statement from the Department of Health and Human Services. A spike in demand for certain drugs as the coronavirus spreads has heightened concerns about shortages
- **Bloomberg Government: Doctors Get Conservatives' Push for Elective Care:** Conservative activists are working with a coalition of health professionals to try to pressure governors and federal lawmakers to let medical practices and hospitals perform more elective and non-emergency services, potentially expediting the reopening of the wider health-care industry. Dozens of doctors from around the U.S. yesterday are set to announce the start of A Doctor A Day, a letter-writing and lobbying campaign consisting of health-care providers who want states to loosen states' restrictions on the services they can provide.