

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, May 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

- Noon: Trump departs White House for Detroit, Michigan
 - 2:10pm: Trump arrives at Ford Rawsonville plant in Ypsilanti
 - 2:15pm: Trump participates in listening session with African-American leaders
 - 3pm: Trump tours components plant; delivers remarks at 3:20pm before departing at 4:10pm
 - Trump arrives back at White House at 6:15pm

CONGRESS

- Senate meets at 10am; set to vote on nomination of John Ratcliffe to be Director of National Intelligence
- 10am: Senate Judiciary Committee holds hearing on authorizing subpoenas related to the investigation of the Russia probe

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The New York Times: Prototype Vaccine Protects Monkeys From Coronavirus:** A prototype vaccine has protected monkeys from the coronavirus, researchers reported on Wednesday, a finding that offers new hope for effective human vaccines. Scientists are already testing coronavirus vaccines in people, but the initial trials are designed to determine safety, not how well a vaccine works. The research published Wednesday offers insight into what a vaccine must do to be effective and how to measure that. "To me, this is convincing that a vaccine is possible," said Dr. Nelson Michael, the director of the Center for Infectious Diseases Research at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.
- **Reuters: U.S. Schools Should Only Reopen With Social Distancing As Benchmarks Met:** CDC: U.S. schools shuttered by the coronavirus should pursue a carefully phased reopening only after public health benchmarks are met, and summer camps should be limited largely only to children from the immediate area, federal guidance recommends. The guidelines, released late on Tuesday by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), come from a set of suggestions for specific settings, including restaurants, mass transit systems and employers with workers at high risk.
- **Reuters: U.S. Nursing Homes Plagued By Infection Control Issues Pre-COVID-19:** Report: U.S. nursing homes have been plagued with infection control deficiencies even before the coronavirus pandemic turned them into hotspots for COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the virus, a government report said on Wednesday. Eighty-two percent of all

nursing homes had an infection prevention and control deficiency cited in one or more years from 2013-2017, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

- **The Associated Press: Deliberative Senate Declines To Debate More Coronavirus Aid:** As Americans confront a crisis unlike any in modern times, the world's greatest deliberative body is doing almost anything but deliberate the coronavirus. It's as though the challenge has split the U.S. Senate into two. On one side is a Senate clamoring for a quick response to the virus outbreak at its door. On the other is the wait-and-see Senate hitting pause on swift action and carrying on with non-pandemic business.
- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Awards \$225 Million for Rural Testing:** Rural health clinics will get \$225 million to expand Covid-19 testing, the Health and Human Services Department announced yesterday. The funds will be divided among 4,500 clinics and can be used to implement testing programs, buy testing supplies, train staff, find and build new facilities, and report data to the HHS, Health Resources and Services Administration head Tom Engels said in a statement.
- **Bloomberg Government: Hospitals Urged to Cut Ties With Anti-Single Payer Coalition:** Advocates for shifting the U.S. to a single-payer health-care system will start a campaign today aimed at getting the American Hospital Association to cut ties with an industry coalition that opposes "Medicare for All" efforts. Physicians for a National Health Program, a group of doctors backing Medicare for All, will kick off a letter-writing and educational campaign to urge the AHA to separate from the Partnership for America's Health Care Future, a consortium of hospitals, doctors, and insurance groups working through a D.C.-based lobby shop to oppose single-payer efforts, PNHP President Adam Gaffney said.
 - The effort was supposed to start with a rally outside of AHA's annual meeting in Washington last month, which was called off due to the pandemic, Gaffney said. Still, the spread of the disease and the shutdown of many of America's hospitals could be making a case for shifting to a system in which the government would pay health-care bills, Gaffney said. "The fact that hospitals aren't resilient in the face of a major health crisis makes you see it might be time to rethink the way we pay doctors and hospitals," he said.
 - The AHA was among the earliest members of the Partnership, and the hospital industry would stand to lose billions of dollars each year if forced to accept only Medicare or Medicaid rates for their services. Gaffney's group was encouraged last year when the American Medical Association, the country's largest doctors' lobby, pulled out of the Partnership after his group started a similar campaign that included protesting at the AMA's annual meeting, Alex Ruoff reports.