

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, June 12, 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 in Bedminster, N.J.; has no public events scheduled
- Vice President Mike Pence travels to Pittsburgh, Pa., to meet with faith and community leaders, as well as touring Oberg Industries about reopening economy
 - 9:30am: Pence departs for Pittsburgh
 - 10:30am: Pence arrives in Pittsburgh
 - 11:30a.m. Pence participates in listening session with faith, community leaders at Covenant Church
 - 2:50pm: Pence tours Oberg Industries
 - 3:10pm: Pence delivers remarks at Oberg Industries about reopening economy
 - 5:40pm: Pence departs Pittsburgh
 - 6:35pm: Pence returns to Wash. area

CONGRESS

- Senate convened early this morning to consider the land bill endorsed by President Trump

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Pressed for Health Stimulus Details:** The top Republican and Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee are asking HHS to publish which health-care providers received portions of the about \$210 billion in stimulus funding that's been allocated by lawmakers. "We urge you to expeditiously establish a single, comprehensive and publicly available data source that easily shows the amount of funding received by each provider," Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and top Democrat Ron Wyden (Ore.) told Secretary Alex Azar in a letter.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Congress Confronts Summer Deadlines For Stimulus Spending Decisions:** With the Federal Reserve pledging to do whatever it can to pull the U.S. out of a recession, it is now up to Congress to decide how much more of a spending boost the economy needs, and what form it should take. Important deadlines are looming. Millions of jobless Americans will see their extra unemployment benefits disappear at the end of July unless Congress extends them. Deferred tax payments are due July 15. And many state and local governments must complete annual budgets by June 30. They are counting on more federal aid to close gaping deficits that have forced them to cut spending and lay off workers.

- **Bloomberg Government: Medicaid Providers Fear Delay in Relief:** Medicaid providers hit hard by Covid-19 are hailing the Health and Human Services Department's announcement that long-awaited relief aid is on the way, but they're concerned it'll take too long for the funds to arrive. The department said on Tuesday it was directing \$15 billion in provider relief aid to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program providers who haven't yet received funding. The agency also plans to distribute \$10 billion to safety-net hospitals.
- **The Washington Post: Financial Speculation Surrounding Coronavirus Drug Developed With Taxpayer Money:** Ridgeback Biotherapeutics had no laboratories, no manufacturing facility of its own and a minimal track record when it struck a deal in March with Emory University to license an experimental coronavirus pill invented by university researchers with \$16 million in grants from U.S. taxpayers. But what the tiny Miami company did have was a willingness from its wealthy owners – hedge fund manager Wayne Holman and his wife, Wendy – to place a bet on the treatment in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. That wager paid off with extraordinary speed in May when, just two months after acquiring the antiviral therapy called EIDD-2801 from Emory, Ridgeback sold exclusive worldwide rights to drug giant Merck.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Steven Mnuchin Says White House Considering Second Round Of Stimulus Payments:** The Trump administration is weighing getting behind a second round of stimulus payments for Americans as part of an economic-relief package Congress is likely to consider next month, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Thursday. Mr. Mnuchin said he had discussed with President Trump the idea of additional stimulus payments, though no decision had been made yet on whether to advocate for them in the next bill. "It's something that we're very seriously considering," he told reporters during an online question-and-answer session Thursday.
- **The Wall Street Journal: U.S. Blood Reserves Are Critically Low:** The U.S. blood supply is at critically low levels after Covid-19 shutdowns have emptied community centers, universities, places of worship and other venues where blood drives typically occur. The American Red Cross, which supplies about 40% of the nation's blood, said more than 30,000 planned blood drives have been canceled since mid-March. Even as some businesses, schools and community groups make plans to reopen in coming months, they have told the Red Cross they don't anticipate sponsoring blood drives in the near future.