

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Tuesday, June 23, 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

- 9am: President Trump departs White House for Arizona
 - Trump arrives at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma at 12:55pm
 - 1:20pm: Trump participates in a roundtable briefing on border security
 - 2:35pm: Trump arrives at border wall site in San Luis, Arizona, participates in “commemoration of the 200th mile” of new border wall at 2:40pm, White House says in daily guidance
 - 3:50pm: Trump departs Yuma, Arizona for Phoenix
 - 5:40pm: Trump delivers address to young Americans in Phoenix
 - 7:15pm: Trump departs Phoenix for Washington, D.C.; set to arrive back at White House at 12:25am

CONGRESS

- Senate meets at 10am; resumes consideration of judicial nominees
- Senate to recess from 12:30 to 2:15pm for weekly caucus lunches

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Price Controls on Covid-19 Drugs Sought:** Four prominent House Democrats and one Republican unveiled a pair of bills designed to keep the price of Covid-19 drugs from skyrocketing, signaling that the group is still pushing to tack on a pharmaceutical pricing provision into the next coronavirus-response legislation, Alex Ruoff reports.
 - The bills together would keep drugmakers from obtaining exclusive licenses for new drugs that treat or prevent Covid-19, require the government to mandate “reasonable, affordable pricing” for those medicines, and limit price increases for existing medicines – such as Gilead’s remdesivir – that could be used on Covid-19 patients. The bills also would establish a federal database of biomedical investment information for Covid-19.
- **Bloomberg Government: DOD Teams With Finance Agency on Virus Supplies:** The Pentagon is working with the U.S.’s international finance agency on issuing loans from a \$100 million pool to increase domestic production of medical supplies currently made largely overseas, from syringes to protective gear, in response to Covid-19. The Defense Department announced a memorandum of agreement with the U.S. International Development Finance Corp. yesterday to administer loans using authority under the Defense Production Act and funds under the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136).

- **Politico: Trump Aides Consider A CDC Overhaul As Virus Cases Surge:** White House officials are putting a target on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, positioning the agency as a coronavirus scapegoat as cases surge in many states and the U.S. falls behind other nations that are taming the pandemic. Trump administration aides in recent weeks have seriously discussed launching an in-depth evaluation of the agency to chart what they view as its missteps in responding to the pandemic including an early failure to deploy working test kits, according to four senior administration officials. Part of that audit would include examining more closely the state-by-state death toll to tally only the Americans who died directly of Covid-19 rather than other factors. About 120,000 people in the U.S. have died of the coronavirus so far, according to the CDC's official count.
- **The Hill: FDA Warns Against 9 Hand Sanitizers After Dangerous Chemical Discovered:** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning against the use of nine hand sanitizers produced by a Mexico-based manufacturer due to the potential presence of a toxic substance. The FDA said methanol, which can be dangerous when absorbed through the skin or ingested, was identified in nine different hand sanitizers produced by Eskbiochem SA. Substantial methanol exposure can result in nausea, vomiting, headache, blurred vision, permanent blindness, seizures, coma, permanent damage to the nervous system or death, according to the FDA.
- **Politico: Swamped Mental Health And Addiction Services Appeal For Covid Bailout:** Mental health and addiction treatment centers and counselors have been overwhelmed with work during the coronavirus pandemic and economic crash. But many are struggling to stay afloat amid confusion and delays over the federal bailout for the health care industry. Some have waited months for the release of promised aid. Others held out and didn't apply, believing they'd get a better deal in a future round of funding aimed at centers that see mostly low-income patients. As a result, nearly a third haven't received any of the \$175 billion HHS is doling out to hospitals and other health providers on the front lines of the coronavirus response. And now, they're appealing to the government for help.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Lawmakers Ask Fed To Help Businesses Struggling To Make Mortgage Payments:** More than 100 members of Congress are calling on the Trump administration and the Federal Reserve to help struggling businesses pause debt payments in a key real-estate financing market. Many of the hotels, shopping malls and office buildings that borrow money in the roughly \$550 billion market for commercial-mortgage-backed securities said they have been unable to negotiate debt reprieves during the coronavirus pandemic. Some are worried they could lose their properties to foreclosure, The Wall Street Journal reported this month.