

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, June 29, 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

- 1pm: President Trump has lunch with Vice President Mike Pence
 - Trump faces pressure over reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin put bounties on U.S. troops in Afghanistan and the U.S. took no action in response

CONGRESS

- House meets at 9am; first votes expected as early as 2:30pm
 - The chamber is set to vote on a bill that would allow the government to negotiate the price of some medicines
 - Also up for consideration: A resolution to overturn an OCC rule on how banks comply with an anti-redlining law; a measure that would allow consumers easier access to credit reports; legislation to help homeowners during the pandemic
- Senate meets at 3pm; resumes debate on the National Defense Authorization Act

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Virus Surge Said Likely to Continue for Weeks:** A surge in cases that has seen record numbers of new U.S. cases in recent days is likely to continue for weeks after states moved too soon to reopen their economies, two of the leading U.S. public health experts said yesterday. The warnings by Tom Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control from 2009 to 2017, and Scott Gottlieb, former commissioner of the FDA, came as a poll showed confidence in how the U.S. is dealing with Covid-19 has fallen.
- **Bloomberg Government: Cancellation of NIH Grant Gets Scrutiny:** The termination of an NIH research grant that directed some of its dollars toward coronavirus research in Wuhan, China has raised questions from leaders on the House Energy and Commerce and Science, Space, and Technology panels. Given the research's ability to inform the public about coronavirus transmission, "it is deeply concerning that it may have been canceled for political reasons in the midst of the current pandemic," Reps. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas), Frank Pallone Jr. (D-N.J.), Diana DeGette (D-Colo.), and Bill Foster (D-Ill.) told Azar on Friday in a letter provided to Bloomberg Law.
 - The letter follows the confirmation by Anthony Fauci that the NIH canceled a grant to the EcoHealth Alliance because "the NIH was told to cancel it" during an Energy and Commerce hearing on Covid-19. Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, later confirmed that direction came from the White House to Politico. Trump vowed in April that "we will end that

grant very quickly,” two weeks before EcoHealth Alliance announced the termination.

- The announcement raised flags from groups like the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Research!America, and the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

- **Bloomberg Government: Lawmakers Offer Telehealth Expansion:** Reps. Mikie Sherrill (D-N.J.) and Kevin Hern (R-Okla.) introduced a bipartisan measure on Friday that would “build on telehealth’s proven success during the COVID-19 pandemic by codifying Medicare reimbursements for telehealth services,” according to a statement. The bill, titled the “Protect Telehealth Access Act,” would eliminate a requirement that someone receiving telehealth services must be located in a rural area or health professional shortage area, and that the person may only get telehealth services at home in limited circumstances.