

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, June 4, 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

- 3pm: President Trump receives intelligence briefing
- 4:30pm: Trump signs executive order on expediting permitting

CONGRESS

- Senate meets at 10am; resumes consideration of Michael Pack to lead Broadcasting Board of Governors
- A group of senators today plans to introduce legislation that would expand U.S. sanctions against Gazprom PJSC's Nord Stream 2 pipeline between Russia and Germany

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Doctors Said Need Federal Money Faster:** Republican congressional leaders joined Democrats in a rare bipartisan rebuke of how the Trump administration is sending out emergency funds meant to bolster hospitals and doctors. HHS is not giving enough money to doctors who rely heavily on Medicaid funds, they said in a letter to Secretary Alex Azar.
 - Their letter reflects months of frustration by rural hospitals and doctors serving low-income Americans, who say HHS has favored wealthier hospitals and doctors over them in distributing emergency funds.
 - Signing the letter were Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), the chairman of the Finance Committee, and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), the panel's ranking member, as well as Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-N.J.), chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), the panel's ranking member.
 - Lawmakers gave the federal government \$175 billion in emergency funds as part of two bills this year but largely left it up to the administration to dole out the money. The agency has sent much of the emergency cash out so far based on Medicare spending and to hospitals in hard-hit cities.
- **The New York Times: Senate Gives Final Approval To Revisions To Small-Business Program:** The Senate gave final approval on Wednesday to a measure that would relax the terms of a federal loan program for small businesses struggling amid the pandemic, sending the bill to President Trump's desk for his signature. The legislation, approved overwhelmingly by the House last week to enact changes to the Paycheck Protection Program, would extend to 24 weeks from

eight weeks the period that small businesses would have to spend the loan money. Without that change, the time for businesses to use the funds would have lapsed in only a few days.

- **Bloomberg Government: U.S. Falls Just Short of May Virus Testing Goal With 12 Million:** The Trump administration came up shy of meeting its goal of doing about 12.9 million tests in May. Brett Giroir, a top official at the Department of Health and Human Services who has overseen the administration's efforts to ramp up testing, said yesterday that the country did about 12 million tests last month.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Health Insurers Offer Premium Discounts:** Anthem Inc. is joining the growing number of health insurers offering premium discounts, as the companies see savings from sharp drop-offs in surgeries and other types of care canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic. Anthem said it would provide \$2.5 billion to customers, health-care providers and others in various forms, including premium credits of 10% to 15% in July for some individual policyholders and fully insured employers. The big insurer follows others including Premera Blue Cross, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Priority Health, as well as UnitedHealth Group Inc., that have given discounts to some customers.