

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Tuesday, June 9, 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

- 2:15 p.m.: President Trump meets with Sec. of State Michael Pompeo

### CONGRESS

- House not in session, returns Thursday for pro forma session
- Senate meets at 10am; resumes consideration of motion to proceed to a bill to permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and national parks maintenance and plans to vote at 2:15 p.m. to confirm Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr. to serve as U.S. Air Force chief of staff

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The Hill: Senate GOP Leaders Don't Expect Next Coronavirus Bill Before Mid-July:** Members of Senate GOP leadership said on Monday that they do not expect to be able to pass another coronavirus relief bill until mid-to-late July. The Senate is in session for more than three weeks before they leave Washington for a two-week July 4 recess. But several members of GOP leadership said on Monday that they do not expect to pass a bill before the break, delaying a fifth round of coronavirus relief until after they return on July 20.
- **Bloomberg Government: Senators Urge HHS to Fund Medicaid-Focused Hospitals:** Sens. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) yesterday requested the Trump administration to “act swiftly” to distribute emergency funds allocated in Covid-19 funding packages to hospitals “that overwhelmingly serve Medicaid and low-income patients,” according to a statement. Without adequate federal funding, these hospitals will be unable to effectively treat the country’s most vulnerable communities, they said in the letter.
- **The New York Times: Testing Nursing Home Workers Can Help Stop Coronavirus. But Who Should Pay?:** Like all nursing home workers in New York State, Shikilia Davis is required to get a test for coronavirus twice a week, part of a state order aimed at containing the startling death toll of residents in nursing homes. But late last month, Ms. Davis said her employer, Apex Rehabilitation & Healthcare on Long Island, sent her home after she refused to provide her insurance card before getting tested. She said the nursing home wanted to bill her health insurer rather than paying for the test itself, even though Ms. Davis’s insurer has declined to cover the tests.

- **Bloomberg Government: VA Salary Cap Bill Clears Senate:** The Senate cleared by unanimous consent a technical amendment passed by the House for legislation that would increase a salary cap for certain health-care officials at the Veterans Affairs Department.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Coronavirus Aid Distribution Methods Still Disfavor Hospitals Most In Need:** The Trump administration's distribution of about \$175 billion in federal aid to health-care providers has channeled more of that money to profitable hospitals and less to struggling facilities that most need the support amid the coronavirus pandemic, drawing renewed scrutiny and criticism by lawmakers and industry groups. For hospitals, the Department of Health and Human Services allocated the initial \$50 billion round of the aid based on their Medicare reimbursements and patient revenue. That puts hospitals heavily reliant on Medicaid, the federal-state program for low-income and disabled people, at a disadvantage.
- **Bloomberg Government: U.S. Can't Easily Break Chinese Supply Chains:** Trump's trade war amplified calls in the U.S. and elsewhere for reducing dependence on China for strategic goods. Now, the coronavirus has politicians vowing to take action. The U.S. has talked about bringing supply chains home from China and even publicly floated the need for a group of friendly Asian nations that could help produce essential goods. Trump last month even said the U.S. would save \$500 billion if it cut off ties with China. But interviews with a dozen government officials and analysts in the Asia-Pacific show that any broader effort to restructure supply chains is little more than wishful thinking so far.
  - The U.S. will exempt more Chinese imports from tariffs, including certain television LCD main-board assemblies and lithium-ion batteries, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said in a Federal Register notice.
- **Bloomberg Government: Medicare Spending Fell in May:** Medicare spending fell 9% to \$6 billion in May as those relying on the insurance program didn't seek routine care, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. On a longer scale though, federal outlays were higher partly due to an increase in the total number of Medicare beneficiaries and because health costs grew, CBO said in the report, published yesterday. Between October to March outlays were \$2.3 trillion, or \$149 billion (7%) higher than they were during the same period last year, the CBO said.
- **The Associated Press: In Poor Regions, Easing Virus Lockdowns Brings New Risks:** As many countries gingerly start lifting their lockdown measures, experts worry that a further surge of the coronavirus in under-developed regions with shaky health systems could undermine efforts to halt the pandemic, and they say more realistic options are needed. Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, India and Pakistan are among countries easing tight restrictions, not only before their outbreaks have peaked but also before any detailed surveillance and testing system is in place to keep the virus under control. That could ultimately have devastating consequences, health experts warn.