

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Monday, July 13, 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

- 12:30pm: President Trump has lunch with VP Mike Pence
- 2pm: Trump holds a pro-law enforcement roundtable discussion
- The Trump administration plans to make an announcement this week related to escalating tensions in the South China Sea, where Washington and Beijing are vying for military supremacy, according to two people familiar with the matter

CONGRESS

- House meets at noon in pro forma session; votes not expected
- Senate meets at 5:30pm in pro forma session; votes not expected
 - Judiciary Chairman Lindsey Graham said Sunday he plans to invite former Special Counsel Robert Mueller to testify about the probe of Russian interference in the 2016 election
- China announced sanctions against U.S. officials including Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, in a largely symbolic attempt to retaliate over Washington's moves to punish Beijing for its treatment of ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang region

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Becker's Hospital Review: CMS to send quality experts to nursing homes in COVID-19 hot spots:** CMS plans to deploy groups of quality improvement experts, clinicians and consumers to nursing homes in COVID-19 hot spots, the agency said July 10. The groups, known as quality improvement organizations, will help facilities improve care and infection control processes for Medicare patients. CMS also is implementing an updated survey process for nursing homes to address care concerns specific to facilities in areas where COVID-19 cases are surging. The goal is to help nursing homes improve infection control processes to limit the spread of COVID-19 among residents and staff.
- **Bloomberg Government: Appropriations Markups:** The House Appropriations Committee is scheduled to mark up the fiscal 2021 Energy and Water Development and Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bills today. House appropriators plowed through all their subcommittee markups and five of their 12 full committee markups last week, but the outlook for funding the government remains murky because of the Senate's inaction, lawmakers say.
 - House Democrats' goal has likely been reduced to holding floor votes on their bill by late July or early August, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) said last week. After that, it's unclear when lawmakers could hold bicameral discussions, she said. "The goal is for us to get through subcommittee, full committee, and deliberation on the floor by the beginning of August, end of July," DeLauro said in a hallway

interview. “And we’ve got the Senate, which in my understanding isn’t really doing -- I don’t think they’ve done anything on this stuff.”

- Senate appropriators haven’t released any of their bills as Republicans and Democrats disagree over whether it’s appropriate to offer amendments on coronavirus aid and police violence.
 - Tomorrow the committee is scheduled to mark up the fiscal 2021 Defense, Commerce-Justice-Science, and Transportation-HUD appropriations bills.
- **Bloomberg Government: Covid-19 Reinvades U.S. States That Already Beat It Back Once:** The first states to endure the coronavirus this spring hoped the worst would be behind them. Instead, the virus is coming back. Many places that suffered most in the first wave of infections, including California, Louisiana, Michigan and Washington state, are seeing case counts climb again after months of declines. It’s not just a matter of more testing. Hospitalizations and, in some places, deaths are rising, too.
 - **Stat: Hospitals Running Short Of Remdesivir For Covid-19 Patients:** With Covid-19 patients filling her Houston hospital, pharmacist Katherine Perez wishes she had enough remdesivir to treat all those who might benefit. In June, as Texas businesses welcomed customers and coronavirus cases surged, Houston Methodist, the hospital where she works, restricted the medication to only those patients who weren’t yet on ventilators, in the hope of making the supply last longer. Even with those narrowed criteria — and with enough vials to treat 200 more patients delivered last weekend — there still isn’t enough.
 - **Bloomberg Government: Remdesivir Tied to 62% Reduction in Death Risk:** Gilead Sciences’s remdesivir reduced mortality risk for Covid-19 patients by 62% compared to standard care, according to a analysis of trial data released Friday by the drug company. The analysis compared late-stage trial results with real-world treatment. The report showed the death rate for patients treated with remdesivir was 7.6% at Day 14, compared to 12.5% among patients not taking remdesivir.
 - **Becker’s Hospital Review: Student debt a barrier to health insurance, United Hospital Fund says:** Lawmakers should implement a tax credit for health insurance premiums that is tied to student debt payments, according to a HealthWatch report from the United Hospital Fund, an independent organization focused on health policy in New York. College graduates face several obstacles as they enter an economy damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, lose school-sponsored health coverage, age off their parents' health plans and make student loan payments. The United Hospital Fund calls for a policy that would allow student debtors who apply for health coverage through the New York State of Health Marketplace to deduct their student loan payments from their income that's used to calculate premium tax credits under the ACA. UFH said lower income may allow for recent graduates to receive more subsidies to help them with their health insurance premiums.