

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Weekly Capitol Hill Update - Monday, July 24, 2017

Congressional Schedule

Senate

- Convenes Monday at 4pm; look for senators to continue working their way through nominations, with David Bernhardt, Trump's pick to be deputy interior secretary, up for a floor vote Monday
- Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said the Senate will vote this week to take up health-care legislation
- House and Senate lawmakers in talks on Senate-passed S. 722, a bill that would strengthen Russia and Iran sanctions; votes possible if deal reached

House

- Meets at noon Monday; last votes no later than 3pm Friday
- Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy says the House intends to consider security minibus H.R. 3219, a combination of spending measures for Defense, Energy and Water Development, Military Construction-VA and the Legislative Branch
- House to take up several veterans bills, incl. S. 114 on funding for VA Choice program, a measure that has been mentioned as a possible future vehicle bill for debt limit legislation
- H.J. Res. 111 that would overturn a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau rule to make it easier for consumers to sue banks
(*Bloomberg Government*)

Legislative Updates

- **Week in Review:**
 - *GOP reverses course on healthcare.* "Senate Republican leaders are desperately searching for the 50 votes they need to open a debate on ObamaCare repeal-and-replace legislation after a Wednesday scolding at the White House from President Trump. Leaders have reopened negotiations on their previous bill, reversing course from their plans to move to a vote on a straight repeal of ObamaCare. But it's not clear if they will have any more luck this time in corralling enough centrist and conservative Republicans to move the bill forward."

- To read more: <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/342850-trump-tries-to-save-health-repeal>
- ***Parliamentarian rules against key provisions in Obamacare repeal bill.*** “Several key provisions in the Senate's Obamacare repeal and replace bill, including language targeting Planned Parenthood, may have to be stripped or could be eliminated on the Senate floor by Democrats because they don't comply with budget rules, according to Democrats on the Senate Budget Committee. The Senate parliamentarian advised Friday in an informal and preliminary ruling that key conservative agenda items, including defunding Planned Parenthood for one year and banning coverage of abortion in Obamacare insurance plans, do not comply with Senate rules on reconciliation, the fast-track procedure the GOP is using to repeal Obamacare.”
 - To read more: <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/07/21/democrats-key-provisions-stripped-from-obamacare-bill-240820>
- ***House GOP unveils budget plan that attaches major spending cuts to coming tax overhaul bill.*** “House Republicans unveiled a 2018 budget plan Tuesday that would pave the way for ambitious tax reform legislation – but only alongside a package of politically sensitive spending cuts that threaten to derail the tax rewrite before it begins. GOP infighting over spending, health care and other matters continues to cast doubt on whether the budget blueprint can survive a House vote. Failing to pass a budget could complicate leaders’ plans to move on to their next governing priority as hopes of a health-care overhaul appeared to collapse late Monday in the Senate.”
 - To read more: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/house-gop-unveils-budget-plan-that-attaches-major-spending-cuts-to-coming-tax-reform-bill/2017/07/18/6e68b679-c63a-4dd1-a3da-e191636946ad_story.html?utm_term=.767f40704655
- ***House Republicans to fall back on more modest spending plan.*** “House GOP leaders are resorting to Plan B on their spending strategy after falling woefully short of the support needed to pass a massive government funding package without Democratic votes. Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy announced Tuesday night that the House will vote next week on a measure that includes just four of the 12 bills needed to fund the federal government. That decision comes after GOP leaders failed to get enough Republican support to pass the full dozen without the help of their minority-party counterparts.”
 - To read more: <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/07/18/house-republicans-spending-plan-240673>
- ***Bill would give dialysis clinics option to seek certification from a third party.*** “A bill that has passed the House Ways and Means Committee would give dialysis clinics the option to seek certification from an approved third party. CMS has struggled to keep up with requests for initial certifications and approving expansions on dialysis units and other health care facilities for years. “This bill enables dialysis facilities to utilize independent third party accreditors like other types of Medicare facilities are currently able to do,” said Kidney Care Partners

Chair Frank Maddux, MD. “Instead of new facilities sitting idle for many months, the bill will enable patients to have quicker access to more convenient sites of care which will improve patient outcomes.”

- To read more: <http://www.nephrologynews.com/bill-would-give-dialysis-clinics-option-to-seek-accreditation-from-a-third-party/>

- **Week Ahead:**

- ***Uncertainty surrounds ObamaCare repeal vote.*** “The coming week will be crucial for the years-long fight to repeal ObamaCare, as the Senate heads towards a key vote expected on Tuesday. But it is unclear what exactly the Senate will be voting on. The chamber will be voting to begin debate, known as a "motion to proceed," but leaders have not yet said which bill the Senate will then be proceeding to.”
 - To read more: <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/343185-week-ahead-uncertainty-surrounds-obamacare-repeal-vote>
- ***Budget resolution missing from House agenda.*** “Budget resolution missing from House agenda. “Republicans did not include a vote on their budget in the schedule they released Monday of activity this week – the last before the August recess. The resolution, which the Budget Committee approved last week, has divided the GOP, with conservative Republicans demanding greater cuts to mandatory spending and centrists calling for a new, bipartisan approach to the blueprint.”
 - To read more: <http://thehill.com/policy/finance/343454-budget-resolution-missing-from-house-agenda>

Regulatory and Administration Updates

- ***Bureau of Labor Statistics' Monthly Labor Review highlights Nursing and the Great Recession.*** “This article uses data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey to examine trends in labor market outcomes for registered nurses from 2002 to 2015. Special attention is paid to the 2007–10 period, which encompasses the Great Recession. The analysis reveals that nursing employment and wages increased during the recession, lending support to previous research suggesting that nursing is a recession-proof, countercyclical profession.”
 - To read more: <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2017/article/nursing-and-the-great-recession.htm>
- ***ANA and CDC release white paper on nurses' role in antibiotic stewardship.*** “The purpose of this American Nurses Association/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (ANA/CDC) White Paper is to inform registered nurses in the United States about the problem of antibiotic resistance and facilitate their embracing an expanded and clearly recognized role in hospital antibiotic stewardship programs (ASPs) and activities.”
 - To review the white paper: <http://www.nursingworld.org/ANA-CDC-AntibioticStewardship-WhitePaper>

- *Pence ally emerges as key proponent of Obamacare repeal.* “A Medicaid expert and close associate of Vice President Mike Pence has emerged as one of the most influential advocates of the Obamacare repeal effort. Seema Verma, who runs Medicare and Medicaid for the Trump administration, keeps a low public profile, but behind the scenes, she’s been guiding skeptical Republican senators and governors through the Obamacare repeal proposals and reassuring them that their states will do just fine under the new Medicaid financing system it envisions.”
 - To read more: <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/07/21/pence-ally-emerges-as-key-proponent-obamacare-repeal-240779>

Articles of Interest

- *New transplant rules help more African Americans get kidneys.* “As an African American physician specializing in kidney diseases, Jerry McCauley is keenly aware of racial gaps that have plagued his field. Compared with white people, blacks are far more likely to develop kidney disease and wind up on dialysis, yet are less likely to be evaluated and listed for a lifesaving transplant. McCauley is proud to report, however, that a longstanding disparity in actual kidney transplants has been eliminated. Thanks to improvements in allocation policies that he helped to bring about – and an increase in African American organ donors – blacks on the waiting list now get their fair share of kidneys from deceased donors. So do whites, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians.”
 - To read more: <http://www.philly.com/philly/health/health-news/new-transplant-rules-help-more-african-americans-get-new-kidneys-20170721.html>
- *Fraud And Billing Mistakes Cost Medicare – And Taxpayers – Tens Of Billions Last Year.* “Federal health officials made more than \$16 billion in improper payments to private Medicare Advantage health plans last year and need to crack down on billing errors by the insurers, a top congressional auditor testified Wednesday. James Cosgrove, who directs health care reviews for the Government Accountability Office, told the House Ways and Means oversight subcommittee that the Medicare Advantage improper payment rate was 10 percent in 2016, which comes to \$16.2 billion.”
 - To read more: <http://khn.org/news/fraud-and-billing-mistakes-cost-medicare-and-taxpayers-tens-of-billions-last-year/>

Congressional Hearings of Interest

Wednesday, July 26th

- The Senate Special Committee on Aging holds a hearing on “Progress Toward a Cure for Type I Diabetes: Research and the Artificial Pancreas.”
 - 9:30 a.m., 106 Dirksen Senate Office Building
- The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health holds a hearing on “Examining the Extension of Special Needs Plans.”
 - 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn House Office Building