

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Thursday, July 8, 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

- 2pm: President Trump welcomes Mexico's president to White House; leaders hold bilateral meeting at 2:05pm
- 2:35pm: Leaders hold expanded bilateral meeting
- 3:35pm: Trump, AMLO sign joint declaration in Rose Garden
- 6:35pm: Leaders deliver joint press statement
- 6:45pm: Trump hosts working dinner with AMLO

CONGRESS

- House, Senate out of session this week and next
- House Appropriations Defense subcmte set to consider appropriations bill
- Bills to cover Commerce, Justice and Transportation-HUD depts also set for mark-up

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Beckers Hospital Review: Mount Sinai, Emergent BioSolutions to test COVID-19 blood plasma as preventive treatment:** Drugmaker Emergent BioSolutions is partnering with New York City-based Mount Sinai to test its experimental COVID-19 hyperimmune globulin treatment, COVID-HIG.
- **Bloomberg Government: Labor-HHS-Education Bill Advances:** The House Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee advanced by a vote yesterday of 9-6 a measure fund the Health and Human Services Department in fiscal 2021 at \$96.4 billion, a \$1.5 billion increase from fiscal 2020.
 - One way this bill differs from prior years is in its emergency funding for the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, which is playing a key role in Operation Warp Speed's efforts to accelerate the development of a coronavirus vaccine, Shira Stein reports.
 - BARDA would receive \$4.5 billion to develop and make vaccines and therapeutics for public health emergencies. The agency has spent at least \$2.76 billion on the development and trials of Covid-19 therapeutics, technologies, and vaccines, according to its website.
 - The bill also appears to address decades of public health funding cuts that have led to the decay of the nation's public health infrastructure.
 - Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), the panel's ranking Republican, said he is disappointed that almost the entire budget increase for the National Institutes of Health was

done in emergency spending because that doesn't provide consistent funding for the agency.

- **The Hill: Trump Administration Moves To Formally Withdraw US From WHO:** The White House has officially moved to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO), a senior administration official confirmed Tuesday, breaking ties with a global public health body in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. The U.S. has submitted its withdrawal notification to the United Nations secretary-general, the official said. Withdrawal requires a year's notice, so it will not go into effect until July 6, 2021, raising the possibility the decision could be reversed.
- **Bloomberg Government: U.S. Plans a Testing Surge:** The federal government is ramping up coronavirus testing in Louisiana, Texas and Florida, three states seeing a surge in Covid-19 infections, as health officials attempt to get a firm grasp on how the fast-moving pandemic is evolving. Eight temporary testing sites will each perform as many as 5,000 free tests a day, the Department of Health and Human Services said. Four sites opened yesterday in Baton Rouge, La., while one in Edinburg, Texas, and three in Jacksonville, Fla., will open today. The sites will remain open for up to 12 days.
 - Increased testing could help health experts get a clearer picture of how the coronavirus is moving through the population, as officials weigh how far to go in reopening the economy -- or in rolling back steps already taken to revive business.
- **Bloomberg Government: Loan Extension Unlikely to Spur Big Lending:** Congress' last-minute extension of a pandemic relief loan program to August is unlikely to increase banks' appetite to lend the remaining money. Lawmakers extended the popular but embattled Paycheck Protection Program, which expired June 30, before leaving for a two-week July recess. But interest in the program had already waned after an explosion of interest in March when Congress first approved \$349 billion in emergency lending. The program, which offers loan forgiveness if funds are used for specific purposes, is meant to bolster businesses struggling in the pandemic-induced recession. "Some small banks will be involved in it, but it'll just continue to be at a much slower pace than you saw originally," Keefe, Bruyette & Woods bank analyst Catherine Meador said.
- **Bloomberg Government: Chief Justice Roberts Was Hospitalized After Head Injury:** Chief Justice John Roberts was hospitalized overnight last month for an injury he suffered to his forehead after falling while walking for exercise, a U.S. Supreme Court spokeswoman said. Roberts' doctors believe the fall was due to lightheadedness caused by dehydration and have ruled out a seizure. Roberts, 65, has suffered from at least two seizures in the past.