

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Wednesday, August 12, 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

- President Trump speaks on opening U.S. schools at 3pm

CONGRESS

- House, Senate out
- House Democrats hold call to update caucus on virus talks in afternoon

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The Washington Post: Health-Care Workers Lose Out On New Paid Sick Leave As Trump Administration Allows For Broad Exemptions:** A government watchdog said in a report out Tuesday that the Labor Department “significantly broadened” an exemption allowing millions of health-care workers to be denied paid sick leave as part of the law Congress passed in March to help workers during the coronavirus pandemic. Congress passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act in March to ensure workers at small- and medium-size companies were able to take paid leave if they or a family member became sick with the coronavirus. The law exempts health-care providers as well as companies with more than 500 employees.
- **Bloomberg Government: Rural Doctors Get HHS Assist With Payment System:** Rural communities may receive up to \$5 million in investments from the administration to redesign their health-care systems as part of a program to try out different methods of paying doctors and facilities based on patients’ overall health. The program announced yesterday is voluntary for health-care providers and will offer participating rural communities much-needed consistent resources that could help expand access to care.
- **Bloomberg Government: States Shield Mail-In Voting From Postal Delay:** State officials wary of slower-than-usual mail delivery are extending mail-in ballot deadlines and making backup plans to smooth early voting in the weeks before the November election, but experts warn tens of thousands of ballots might still be thrown out. Amid a historic surge of interest in mail-in voting because of the coronavirus pandemic, a new postmaster general has barred overtime and changed other policies that some complain are slowing mail delivery. And because ballots in most states must be in the hands of state officials on Election Day, delays could mean uncounted votes.
- **Bloomberg Government: Pandemic’s Effect on Overdoses Probed:** Both Pallone and House Energy and Commerce ranking member Greg Walden (R-Ore.) asked HHS

Secretary Alex Azar about concerns the coronavirus pandemic “has exacerbated the ongoing substance use disorder and overdose crisis in the United States,” according to a statement. The leaders asked Azar to brief them on the latest trends on overdoses, how those trends are affected by the pandemic, and “what more the federal government needs to do to address this growing crisis.

- **Bloomberg Government: Trump to Lift Methane Regulations:** The Trump administration is abandoning Obama administration curbs on methane leaks from oil and gas wells, a move that even some drillers oppose and that could become a campaign issue in the swing state of Pennsylvania. The effort, which an administration official said would be finalized tomorrow, represents the final Trump administration blow to former President Barack Obama’s three-part plan for stifling planet-warming emissions, following eased limits on power plants and automobiles.