

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, August 20, 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

- 11am: President Trump welcomes Iraq Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to White House; holds bilateral meeting
- 1:05pm: Trump departs White House en route to Pennsylvania
- 2:45pm: Trump arrives at building product co. in Old Forge, Pa.; delivers remarks at 3pm
  - Trump returns to White House at 6pm

### CONGRESS

- House, Senate out; House to return to consider postal service legislation on Saturday

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The New York Times: Blood Plasma Treatment For Covid-19 Now On Hold At F.D.A.:** Last week, just as the Food and Drug Administration was preparing to issue an emergency authorization for blood plasma as a Covid-19 treatment, a group of top federal health officials including Dr. Francis S. Collins and Dr. Anthony S. Fauci intervened, arguing that emerging data on the treatment was too weak, according to two senior administration officials. The authorization is on hold for now as more data is reviewed, according to H. Clifford Lane, the clinical director at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. An emergency approval could still be issued in the near future, he said.
- **Bloomberg Government: Momentum Swells for Job Retention Credit:** There is widespread, bipartisan agreement that it is crucial to expand a tax credit to help businesses avoid layoffs, but the effort is stalled until a consensus is reached on another relief package. A loan program enacted in the CARES Act recently expired, but the growing number of virus cases across the country heightens the risk that many businesses may permanently shutter. The employee retention tax credit remains a key form of pandemic relief for businesses.
  - A narrow relief package that Republicans released this week doesn't include references to the credit, and negotiations haven't resumed after faltering. As a result, legislation to broaden the credit is stuck in limbo.
  - Business advocacy groups are pushing for lawmakers to allow businesses that receive Paycheck Protection Program loans under the CARES Act to have access to the employee retention tax credit, as well as to lower the loss threshold businesses needed to use the benefit. The credit is intended to prevent layoffs and is available to all firms regardless of employee count.
- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Makes It Easier to Sign Up for ACA:** People who have lost their health coverage since the beginning of the year now have a streamlined pathway

to sign up for Obamacare. The Health and Human Services Department recently changed a question on the application for Affordable Care Act insurance to indicate that losing coverage since the start of the year allows people to sign up outside of the normal open enrollment period, according to people following ACA coverage.

- **The Hill: Supreme Court To Hear ObamaCare Arguments One Week After November Election:** Oral arguments for the Trump administration-backed lawsuit to strike down the Affordable Care Act (ACA), will be heard at the Supreme Court on Nov. 10, just one week after the presidential election. If successful, the lawsuit would result in 20 million people losing health insurance while the country is in the middle of a pandemic. President Trump and congressional Republicans have no replacement plan.
- **Stat: FDA Rejection Signals Potential New Hurdles For Gene Therapies:** The Food and Drug Administration's unexpected rejection of a gene therapy for the bleeding disorder hemophilia has reverberated through the biotech industry, potentially complicating the path to market for these one-time treatments. In deciding not to approve Roctavian, a BioMarin Pharmaceutical gene therapy for hemophilia A, the FDA demanded two additional years of data to strengthen the case that its benefits are durable.