

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Wednesday, August 26, 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

- 12:15pm: President Trump receives intelligence briefing
- 3pm: Trump meets with medical professionals on Covid-19 in Oval Office

CONGRESS

- House, Senate out

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Covid Testing Required for All Nursing Home Staff:** All nursing homes must test their staff for Covid-19 regularly to detect exposure to the virus under new requirements CMS announced yesterday. There was “good compliance” with previous recommendations that nursing homes test staff routinely in surging states, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma said in a press briefing. But “we want to make sure that every single nursing home is doing this, and if they are not then they’re going to face sanctions,” she said.
- **Bloomberg Government: Virus Testing Push Leaves FDA Lab Oversight in Limbo:** More tests to screen for a variety of ailments will hit the market without FDA oversight under an HHS policy meant to make more Covid-19 tests available, muddying the debate over the agency’s role. While the Food and Drug Administration oversees tests made by commercial companies like Quest Diagnostics, it has more sparingly applied its authority over individual tests developed by labs at health-care centers and universities. The FDA had required emergency approval for these lab-developed tests for coronavirus, but last week the Health and Human Services Department did away with even that cursory oversight to cut red tape.
 - However, that order goes beyond just coronavirus tests, waiving FDA oversight over all tests from laboratories. The move leaves those lab tests in a regulatory limbo, and reignites a long simmering debate over whether commercial tests and laboratory tests should be regulated differently. It’s a pressing question as a new generation of complex diagnostics can screen millions of DNA changes in a single test.
- **Bloomberg Government: Artificial Intelligence Research Centers:** The Trump Administration announced \$1 billion in federal and private funding over the next five years to establish 12 multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional centers to focus on artificial intelligence and quantum information science research. The National Science Foundation, along with several federal partners including the Agriculture Department, will provide \$140 million in funding over five years to seven centers focused on machine-learning,

synthetic manufacturing, precision agriculture and forecasting prediction, according to the Office of Science and Technology Policy announcement today.

- The Energy Department will fund up to \$625 million over five years to five national labs: Argonne, Brookhaven, Fermi, Oak Ridge and Lawrence Berkeley to research quantum networking, sensing, computing and materials manufacturing, according to the announcement. Private sector companies, including IBM and John Deere, are also contributing \$300 million in funding, a senior administration official said during a press call for the announcement.