

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, August 31, 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

- 1:15pm: Trump has lunch with Vice President Mike Pence
- 3pm: Trump meets Barr and Acting Homeland Security Sec. Chad Wolf

CONGRESS

- House, Senate out
- Republican and Democratic leaders remain at an impasse over agreeing to more coronavirus stimulus

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Hahn Promises Vaccine Review Transparency:** FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn promised that the review of a potential Covid-19 vaccine in the U.S. will be transparent to the public, with any clearance by the agency driven by data alone. In an interview yesterday, Hahn responded to questions about the different ways the FDA could clear a vaccine for use: either under an emergency authorization, likely based on more limited data and for use in a narrow group, or a broader approval that could lead to wider use. "We've said all along we're not going to pre-judge what mechanism we're going to use to authorize or approve a vaccine," Hahn said by phone. "We're going to let the data dictate that. The data will dictate what kind of decision is made on the vaccine."
 - The FDA ousted its chief spokeswoman, said a person with knowledge of the move, days after the head of the agency exaggerated the benefits of an experimental coronavirus therapy and others in the Trump administration promoted the erroneous statements. The spokeswoman, Emily Miller, joined the agency this month. She came to the job with communications experience in past government positions, a stint at conservative media outlets, and work advocating for gun rights, but little to no health-care experience.
- **Kaiser Health News: Med Students 'Feel Very Behind' Because Of COVID-Induced Disruptions In Training:** COVID-19 is disrupting just about every student's 2020 education, but medical students have it particularly hard right now. "It's a nightmare scenario for the class of 2021," said Jake Berg, a fourth-year student at the Kentucky College of Osteopathic Medicine in Pikeville. In March, students were abruptly pulled out of hospitals and medical offices, where they normally work with professionals to learn about treating patients. Over the space of less than two weeks, he said, medical students in "pretty much the entire country" transitioned from seeing patients in person to learning online.

- **Bloomberg Government: Trump Announces Cut to Steel Quota From Brazil:** Trump is cutting the cap on allowable steel shipments from Brazil, citing a slump in the U.S. market. In a proclamation issued late Friday, Trump amended a previous decision under the so-called Section 232 national security powers to lower the cap on allowable imports. The limits were set in 2018 as part of a deal between the nations to avoid tariffs that Trump applied to other countries.
 - Trump cited a slumping American steel market, which has only accelerated amid shutdowns spurred by the coronavirus pandemic.
- **Bloomberg Government: Small Businesses Feel Pandemic Pain:** Small businesses are often described as the heart of the U.S. economy. They employ about half of the country's private workforce -- and they've been hit especially hard by the pandemic. But the impact varies widely from region to region, depending on things like the severity of lockdowns and the local mix of industries. The latest Small Business Pulse Survey by the Census Bureau, based on responses collected Aug. 9-15, offers a glimpse of how small U.S. firms see their prospects, five months into the worst economic slump in generations. Most said there's still a way to go before business gets back to normal -- if it ever does.
- **The Hill: Researchers Find First US Case Of COVID-19 Reinfection:** Researchers have documented what appears to be the first U.S. instance of someone getting reinfected with COVID-19. In a preprint of a paper submitted to the journal *The Lancet*, researchers said a 25-year-old man in Nevada was reinfected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus in late May, after recovering from a relatively mild case the month before. Infectious disease experts said reinfections are normal and should be expected, and caution against drawing broad conclusions.
- **Stat: How OneFifteen, Verily's Addiction Medicine Campus, Is Taking Shape:** Verily drew widespread praise last year when it announced an "ambitious endeavor" to combat the opioid epidemic: an addiction medicine campus in Ohio called OneFifteen, its name a nod to the 115 people who died each day in 2017 of opioid overdoses. But in the year and a half since OneFifteen's high-profile launch, Verily has remained relatively quiet about its progress -- and its role in the effort, which is a collaboration between the Alphabet life science spinout and two local health systems.