

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, September 18, 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

- Noon: President Trump receives intelligence briefing
- 3:45pm: Trump departs White House for Minnesota
- 7pm: Trump holds rally in Bemidji, Minn.
- Arrives back at White House at 11:15pm
- Agriculture Dept. to explain how \$13b in new aid to farmers would be distributed after Trump announced plan last night

CONGRESS

- House meets at Noon in pro forma session
- Senate returns Monday to resume judicial nominees

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Kaiser Health News: In Face Of COVID Threat, More Dialysis Patients Bring Treatment Home:** After Maria Duenas was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes about a decade ago, she managed the disease with diet and medication. But Duenas' kidneys started to fail just as the novel coronavirus established its lethal foothold in the U.S. On March 19, three days after Duenas, 60, was rushed to the emergency room with dangerously high blood pressure and blood sugar, Gov. Gavin Newsom implemented the nation's first statewide stay-at-home order.
- **Bloomberg Government: Employers' Hospital Fees Double What Medicare Pays:** Employers and health insurers pay more than twice as much than Medicare does for hospital services, according to a report released today. The report from the RAND Corp., a policy research organization, found that employers and private insurers paid hospitals an average of 247% of what Medicare had paid between 2016 and 2018. That's up from 241% in 2017 and 236% in 2015.
- **Politico: Congress Starts Its Weekend No Closer To A Coronavirus Deal:** Democrats and Republicans appeared even further away from a coronavirus relief deal on Thursday, despite mounting calls from rank-and-file lawmakers – and even President Donald Trump – for action. With no mood for deal-making in either party, the House and Senate are leaving for the weekend with no progress on an agreement, casting further doubt that Congress can muster the political will to adopt another massive economic stimulus measure before the November election.
- **Bloomberg Government: Vaccine Leaders Make Trial Plans Public:** Meanwhile, the companies leading Covid-19 vaccine efforts disclosed detailed information about their

pivotal late-stage clinical trials, and how they plan to gauge their shots' safety and efficacy. The moves by first Moderna, and then later from Pfizer and partner BioNTech, follow mounting fears that the effort to make a vaccine is becoming politicized, and that an inoculation could be rushed to market before it is proven safe and effective. AstraZeneca said it would post its plans as well.

- **Bloomberg Government: Nursing Homes Get Guidelines on Resuming Visits:** The Trump administration issued recommendations yesterday to allow safe indoor and outdoor visitation at nursing homes as the toll of family separation continues to wear on residents. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services encourages outdoor visitation because there's less chance of transmitting Covid-19, but now supports safe resumption of indoor visitation if the facility has had no new Covid-19 infections in the previous two weeks and isn't conducting outbreak testing per CMS guidelines.
- **Bloomberg Government: Millions Lose Employer Health Coverage:** More than 3 million employees lost their employer-sponsored health insurance amid the pandemic and 1.9 million became newly uninsured, according to a new analysis released yesterday by the Urban Institute. Medicaid and other coverage options may have helped reduce the number of uninsured people, according to the report, which was based on Census Bureau data. Between late April and July an estimated 2.2 million adults gained public coverage, it said.
- **Roll Call: Exclusive: States Plan To Independently Vet COVID-19 Vaccine Data:** State officials are expressing skepticism about federal reviews of potential COVID-19 vaccines, with some going so far as to plan to independently analyze clinical trial data before distributing a vaccine in a sign of how sharply trust in federal health agencies has fallen this year. The wariness, which public health experts call highly unusual if not unprecedented, could undercut the goal of a cohesive national immunization strategy and create a patchwork of efforts that may sabotage hopes of containing the coronavirus.