

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, September 19, 2019

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- President Trump doesn't have any public events
- Trump will meet at the White House with a group of senators to discuss possible changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard
 - Meeting is last-ditch effort by refining-state senators to convince Trump to abandon deal drafted with their counterparts from the corn belt
- 11:35am: Vice President Mike Pence speaks on U.S. economy at the Delivering Alpha conference in NYC

CONGRESS

- House meets at 10am, first vote ~1:15pm, last vote ~3pm
 - Expected to consider House Democrats stopgap spending bill [UPDATE: Passed 301-123]
 - 10:45am: Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other senior Democrats will hold news conference ahead of the introduction of a bill aimed at negotiating lower drug prices
- Senate meets at 10am:
 - Resumes consideration of nomination of Brian McGuire to be a deputy undersecretary of the Treasury

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **House to Vote on Health Program Extensions:** Lawmakers reached a deal yesterday on a stopgap spending bill to avert a U.S. government shutdown on Oct. 1, and plan to vote today on a measure that would extend health care programs including Community Health Centers, Medicaid in Puerto Rico and the Demonstration Program for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics.
 - The bill would provide as much as \$20 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Ebola preparedness and response efforts using unobligated amounts in the Infectious Diseases Rapid Response Reserve Fund.
 - It would delay a scheduled \$4 billion reduction in fiscal 2020 Medicaid funding for disproportionate share hospitals.
 - The measure would increase the federal Medicaid match rate for Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories to 100% for the duration of the continuing resolution.
 - Community health centers would be extended at \$569.9 million through Nov. 21.
 - The measure would extend funding for other expiring health programs as well.

- **FDA to Reject Petitions to Delay Generics:** The FDA is tightening its reins on industry petitions that companies or individuals can submit to influence health policy and says it will outright reject faulty requests intended to postpone drug competition. These petitions are a backdoor way industry leaders and groups fight over exclusivity rights and drug safety. Drug companies sometimes sound the alarm to the FDA over certain drugs via this system – called Citizen Petitions – which can delay generics’ market entry. To cut back on unnecessary petitions the FDA advised companies yesterday on what it will and won’t accept. Citizen petitions give companies, groups, or individuals the chance to weigh in on FDA regulatory policies or products and whether they think they should be changed.
- **Arbitration Bill Gets Veto Threat: The Pelosi Pushes Quick Timeline for Drug Bill:** Speaker Nancy Pelosi (Calif.) and other Democratic leaders in the House are stepping up their efforts to empower the government to negotiate prices of certain medicines, with the goal of passing legislation before the end of the year. The House Energy and Commerce Committee’s health panel will hold a hearing Sept. 25, Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.), the chairwoman of the subcommittee, said. Two other House committees, Ways and Means and Education and Labor, will also hold hearings on the proposal this fall with an eye on passage before the end of the year. Pelosi and Democrats will hold a press conference on their drug pricing proposals this morning.
- **Zuckerberg Visits Washington Amid Scrutiny:** Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is visiting Washington as the company confronts growing scrutiny over privacy and marketplace practices. Zuckerberg will meet with lawmakers and “talk about future internet regulation,” Facebook spokesman Andy Stone said in a statement. Zuckerberg is scheduled to meet with Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), according to a person familiar with the plans. Cantwell is the top Democrat on the Senate Commerce Committee that regulates several tech issues and is weighing privacy legislation.
- **Reboot of Congress’s Tech Squad Proposed:** The effort to revive the long-dormant Office of Technology Assessment picked up momentum today as lawmakers unveiled a plan to boost Congress’s arsenal for maneuvering complex technology issues. A bipartisan, bicameral bill from Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.) and Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) would restart the office of technology experts, which has been defunct for more than 20 years, renaming it the Congressional Office of Technology and making other changes.
- **USMCA Should Hinge on Paris Climate Deal, Democrats Say:** More than 100 House Democrats told Trump that a new NAFTA deal should include “binding climate standards” and be paired with a decision for the U.S. to remain part of the global Paris Climate Agreement. The letter to Trump was organized by Rep. Katie Hill (Calif.) and signed by fellow Democrats including Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (N.Y.) and Elijah Cummings (Md.).

- **Centrists Call for Bipartisan Climate Approach:** A coalition of centrist House Democrats are seeking bipartisanship in the climate debate, as Republicans question whether the majority's proposals will achieve reasonable results and left-leaning groups criticize the approach as weak. The New Democrat Coalition unveiled a statement of principles yesterday along with a list of 12 bills – seven of them bipartisan – they believe will offer concrete solutions to climate change. The policy recommendations set a goal of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest, a target that is in line with House Democratic leaders on the Energy and Commerce Committee.
- **Farmers Group Backs Green New Deal:** A coalition of farmers and ranchers is asking lawmakers to support the Green New Deal, but it's unclear if the aims of the group extend to farmers nationwide. The group, which says it represents 10,000 of the millions of farmers and ranchers nationwide, held a joint press conference with lawmakers and climate activists at the Capitol yesterday. The coalition argues both farmers and citizens would benefit if Congress adopted aspects of "regenerative agriculture," which avoids pesticides and fertilizers in favor of tilling less and grazing animals on multiple fields as a way to replenish soil naturally with manure.
- **Pelosi Plans Fix to Female Circumcision Law:** House Democrats plan to revise a 1996 law outlawing female genital mutilation to fix a constitutional defect a federal judge found when dismissing the first federal criminal prosecution brought under the statute. "The House Democratic Majority intends to advance legislation to prohibit FGM," Drew Hammill, a spokesman for Pelosi, said in an email that used a common abbreviation for female genital mutilation.
- **Win or Lose, Trump Will Still Have Grip on Republican Party:** Whether or not Trump wins re-election, his hold on the Republican Party will endure for years to come, supporters and opponents within the GOP agree. Trump has led grassroots opinion on several hot-button issues, turned even elected officials who recoiled from him in 2016 into faithful supporters in 2019 and sidelined influential conservative critics.

 - He owes part of his success to his ingrained popularity among Republican voters, whose fervent loyalty hasn't flagged, even as his actions and behavior shock the Washington establishment. A mid-August poll from Gallup put his approval among Republican voters at 88%, essentially unchanged since Inauguration Day.
- **Kennedy to Challenge Markey:** Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.) plans to announce that he will challenge Sen. Edward Markey in the 2020 Massachusetts Democratic primary, according to a person familiar with his plans. The decision sets up a clash between the scion of one of the most storied political families in American history and an incumbent who has spent more than 40 years in Congress. It would pit two of the party's leading liberal voices in a stark generational fight; Kennedy, 38, was born nearly four years after Markey, 73, was first elected to Congress.

- **Wealth Tax Could be Pain to Implement:** Sen. Elizabeth Warren's (D-Mass.) campaign promise to fund social programs by making America's wealthiest pay a small percentage of their fortune every year could create a costly and difficult compliance system for both the taxpayers and the IRS. A wealth tax affecting the country's 75,000 richest households could raise \$2.75 trillion over the next decade, according to Warren's plan. This proposal is her answer when asked how she plans to pay for expanded child care and debt-free college -- assuming it could actually be implemented.
- **Trump Revs Up Battle With California:** Trump brought his fight with California to a boil during a two-day visit, casting the state as a cautionary tale for Democratic rule ahead of the 2020 election. In less than 48 hours, he singled out California over its burgeoning homeless problems, moved to eviscerate its authority to regulate auto emissions, and stopped at the border wall, highlighting his disdain of its policy of offering sanctuary to undocumented immigrants. It is unusual for a president to wage a pitched battle with a single American state. But California's liberal leaders have emerged as a favorite foil for the president, and he has sought to exploit the state's struggles with homelessness and housing for his own political benefit.
 - For example, Trump said last night the Environmental Protection Agency would issue a notice of violation within a week to San Francisco, alleging that the city's homeless population had increased ocean pollution, including needles washed out to sea from sewers.