

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Tuesday, September 8, 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

- 11:20a: Trump departs White House en route for Jupiter, Fla., where he'll speak on environmental policy at 3p
- 7p: President Trump delivers remarks in Winston-Salem, N.C.

### CONGRESS

- House not in session
- Senate returns from recess at 3p
  - At 5:30pm, chamber will vote on the motion to limit debate on nomination of Brett Ludwig to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
  - Senate Republicans are aiming for a vote this week on a narrow \$500 billion stimulus package in an effort to encourage Democrats to restart negotiations on pandemic aid

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Surprise Billing:** Surprise medical billing proposals are aimed at ending balance billing, where a doctor or facility can't agree with an insurer on the cost of services and charges the patient more than the insurer will pay. Despite bipartisan agreement on the issue, a fix hasn't advanced.
  - The chairmen of the House Energy and Commerce and Education and Labor committees have together called for including a compromise agreement in the next coronavirus related legislative package. House Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal (D-Mass.), however, has not signed off on that compromise, leaving Democratic leaders split on the issue.
  - Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) was part of the agreement with House committee leaders to add a surprise medical billing fix to the next coronavirus related package of bills.
- **Bloomberg Government: Drug Prices:** Lowering the cost of prescription drugs was supposed to be one of the few areas where lawmakers could find bipartisan common ground.
  - But with time running out on the 116th Congress, Senate Finance Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) has yet to find a path forward for his package of drug-pricing measures that would, among other things, cap out-of-pocket costs for the elderly in Medicare Part D at \$3,100 and limit how much drugmakers can raise their prices in Medicare. Finance Committee ranking member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Grassley's

one-time co-author for the drug pricing bill, has withdrawn support for S. 2543, raising doubts about the extent of support among Senate Democrats.

- **Bloomberg Government: Trump Wants to Give Leftover \$300 Billion to Taxpayers:** Trump said Congress should authorize sending taxpayers checks from about \$300 billion left over in a pandemic lending program. "We have \$300 billion sitting in an account that we didn't need," Trump said at a news conference on Friday. "It would be a very appropriate thing to release that to the American people and I am willing to do it."
- **Bloomberg Government: China Proposes Global Data Rules:** China today outlined a slate of rules designed to prevent foreign governments from acquiring data stored locally, seeking to counter Washington's accusations that services like TikTok and WeChat share sensitive user information with Beijing.
- **Politico: Mnuchin Urges More Stimulus Amid Stalled Talks:** Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Sunday he and President Donald Trump believe there should be more stimulus to help American businesses during the coronavirus pandemic, but are stuck on top-line negotiations with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. "The speaker has refused to sit down and negotiate unless we agree to something like a \$2.5 trillion deal in advance," Mnuchin said on "Fox News Sunday." "Let's do a more targeted bill now – and if we need to do more in 30 days, we'll continue to do more. But let's not hold up the American workers and American businesses that need more support."
- **Stat: Plasma Giant Grifols To Buy Alkahest, A Startup Targeting Blood Proteins:** The giant blood plasma processing company Grifols on Monday said it has agreed to buy Alkahest, a Silicon Valley startup founded by Genentech alums that's betting that proteins in plasma can fight diseases including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. The planned acquisition is primed to bring new resources and recognition to the quixotic, often controversial search for an elixir for diseases associated with aging.