

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Weekly Capitol Hill Update - Monday, May 8, 2017

Congressional Schedule

House

- “Meets for a pro forma session at 9 a.m., but lawmakers are out of town for the week.” (CQ)

Senate

- “Convenes at 2 p.m. and considers the nomination of Heather Wilson to be Air Force secretary. Votes are expected at approximately 5:30 p.m. on the Wilson nomination and on whether to limit debate on the nomination of Scott Gottlieb to lead the Food and Drug Administration.” (CQ)
- “**Week Ahead:** Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced plans to take up the nomination of Robert Lighthizer to be U.S. trade representative this week.” (CQ)

Legislative Updates

- **Week in Review:**
 - *Trump signs \$1 trillion spending bill, keeps government open.* “President Donald Trump signed his first piece of major legislation on Friday, a \$1 trillion spending bill to keep the government operating through September. The bill cleared both houses of Congress this week and Trump signed it into law behind closed doors at his home in central New Jersey, well ahead of a midnight Friday deadline for some government operations to begin shutting down. But other budget battles lie ahead as the White House and Congress hammer out a spending plan for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.”
 - To read more: <https://federalnewsradio.com/budget/2017/05/trump-signs-1-trillion-spending-bill-keeps-government-open/>
 - *House Passes Measure to Repeal and Replace the Affordable Care Act.* “The House on Thursday narrowly approved legislation to repeal and replace major parts of the Affordable Care Act, as Republicans recovered from their earlier failures and moved a step closer to delivering on their promise to reshape American health care without mandated insurance coverage. The vote, 217 to

213, held on President Trump's 105th day in office, is a significant step on what could be a long legislative road. Twenty Republicans bolted from their leadership to vote no. But the win keeps alive the party's dream of unwinding President Barack Obama's signature domestic achievement."

- To read more:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/04/us/politics/health-care-bill-vote.html>

- **Week Ahead:**

- *As some Republicans rush to defend House health bill, Senate GOP warily pauses.* "Several Republican leaders have formed a political barricade around the health-care bill that narrowly passed the House last week, defending how the legislation would change insurance coverage for people with preexisting illness or injury. But while House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) and Trump administration officials on Sunday rallied around the House legislation after intense criticism from Democrats, who say the bill would strip protections, moderate Senate Republicans were outright dismissive. "The House bill is not going to come before us," Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) said on ABC's "This Week," adding that the Senate would be "starting from scratch."
 - To read more: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/as-some-republicans-rush-to-defend-house-health-bill-senate-gop-warily-pauses/2017/05/07/47cde200-3346-11e7-b412-62beef8121f7_story.html
- *GOP Senators to Draft Their Own Obamacare Replacement Bill.* "A top Senate Republican said Thursday that even though the House spent months on a health care bill that would repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, the Senate will use that legislation as a starting point to draft a separate measure. "We're going to look at what the House has done and see how much of that we can incorporate in a product that works for us with reconciliation," Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), the conference vice-chairman who also chairs the appropriations subcommittee on health care, told reporters. When asked what that would include, Blunt said: "It's possible it could look a lot like it is now."
 - To read more: <https://morningconsult.com/2017/05/04/gop-senators-draft-obamacare-replacement-bill/>
- *Health Care Will Determine Progress of Rest of Agenda.* "Last week's legislative victories — finishing an omnibus spending bill and getting the rollback of the 2010 health care law through the House — are the foundation for the months of battles to come on Capitol Hill. Appropriators can begin to turn their attention toward the first full fiscal year of Donald Trump's presidency, but their Senate colleagues will also have to deal with the procedural morass that comes with trying to reinvent the health care system through budget reconciliation. Indeed, the fate of the health care measure will likely determine what sort of progress can be made on everything Congress faces this year, from the basic task of funding the government to the more herculean one of rewriting the tax code, all in a time of increasing partisan tension in Washington."

- To read more: <http://www.rollcall.com/news/politics/health-care-determine-progress-agenda#sthash.QsGyIEOR.dpuf>
- ***User Fee Reauthorization Bill Amended Ahead of Wednesday Vote.*** Ahead of Wednesday’s Senate health committee vote on the five-year reauthorizations of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) user fee agreements, the committee has released an updated version of the legislation that includes several medical device bills discussed on the House side. The so-called manager’s amendment of the bill features the same drug, medical device, biosimilar and generic drug user fee agreements crafted over the past two years, as well as new sections on “Pediatric drugs and devices,” “Reauthorizations and improvements related to drugs,” “Device inspection and regulatory improvements,” and additional provisions.”
 - To read more: <http://raps.org/Regulatory-Focus/News/2017/05/08/27498/User-Fee-Reauthorization-Bill-Amended-Ahead-of-Wednesday-Vote/#sthash.B7KHnAgF.dpuf>

Regulatory Updates

- ***CMS proposes payment raises for hospice, skilled nursing and rehab.*** “The CMS is proposing smaller pay increases to skilled-nursing facilities, inpatient rehabilitation facilities and hospice care in 2018 compared to this year. The agency on Thursday proposed skilled nursing facilities receive a \$390 million increase in federal payments for 2018, representing a roughly 1% increase. This is much less than the \$800 million payment hike proposed for skilled nursing facilities last year. Medicare would pay \$80 million a year more to rehabilitation facilities, but that's \$45 million less than what the CMS proposed last year. Hospices would see payments nearly cut in half year over year. Hospices would receive an additional \$180 million, or 1%, more in payments for 2018. In 2017, hospices received a \$330 million increase, or 1.1.% raise.”
 - To read more: <http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20170428/NEWS/170429843>
 - To review the proposed rules and submit comments:
 - <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/05/04/2017-08521/medicare-program-prospective-payment-system-and-consolidated-billing-for-skilled-nursing-facilities>
 - <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/05/04/2017-08519/medicare-program-prospective-payment-system-and-consolidated-billing-for-skilled-nursing-facilities>
 - <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/05/03/2017-08563/medicare-program-fy-2018-hospice-wage-index-and-payment-rate-update-and-hospice-quality-reporting>
 - <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/05/03/2017-08428/medicare-program-inpatient-rehabilitation-facility-prospective-payment-system-for-federal-fiscal>
- ***New HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Report: CMS Validated Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting Program Data, But Should Use Additional Tools to***

Identify Gaming. The HHS OIG released a report last week recommending that CMS “make better use of analytics to ensure the integrity of hospital-reported quality data and the resulting payment adjustments.”

- To read the report: <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-01-15-00320.pdf>
- **Cancer Researcher George Sigounas New HRSA Administrator.** “George Sigounas, PhD, has been appointed the new administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), effective May 1, 2017, according to *Politico*. Dr. Sigounas is a cancer researcher who comes from East Carolina University, where he was a professor in the division of hematology/oncology, department of internal medicine. He helped start a bone marrow transplantation program there. HRSA is an agency of the US Department of Health and Human Services. It is the main federal agency charged with improving healthcare for those who are geographically isolated or economically or medically vulnerable. The agency also oversees blood, organ, and tissue donation.”
 - To read more: <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/879445>

Articles of Interest

- **Iowa likely to have no insurers selling on exchanges for 2018.** “Medica, a Minnetonka, Minn.-based insurer, said on Wednesday that it may pull from Iowa's individual insurance marketplace, potentially leaving no alternative insurance option for most residents next year. Medica, which offers exchange plans for 12,645 members in Iowa, has a relatively small presence in the market but the recent exits of other big insurers — Aetna and Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield — makes Medica just one of two insurers selling plans on the exchanges for 2018. In a statement, Medica said its ability to offer marketplace plans in Iowa “is in question at this point” given the uncertainty in the state's exchanges.”
 - To read more: <http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20170503/NEWS/170509956>
- **States Brace for Big Decisions Under GOP Health Care Changes.** “Even as the Republican health care overhaul remains a work in progress, states are planning for big changes that could swell the ranks of the uninsured and hit them with higher costs. A key tenet underlying the GOP plan is to give states more authority over how to structure their health care markets. That approach is welcome in states that want fewer mandates from the federal government but is causing alarm in states that embraced former President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act.”
 - To read more: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/ohio/articles/2017-05-07/states-brace-for-big-decisions-under-gop-health-care-changes>
- **Healthcare hiring jumps by 19,500 jobs in April on big national gain.** “Healthcare hiring rebounded in April with 19,500 jobs added to the industry, a big lift over March in concert with a solid national jobs gain for the month. The healthcare industry again was among the top national jobs generators in a month that saw the U.S. economy create 211,000 jobs. That drove the national unemployment rate to a 10-year low of 4.4%, a figure that represents full employment. The 211,000 April jobs gain put a disappointing 79,000 gain in March in the rearview mirror.”

- To read more: <http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20170505/NEWS/170509912/healthcare-hiring-jumps-by-19500-jobs-in-april-on-big-national-gain>
- ***Drug, Device Industries Seek Fewer Limits on Off-Label Communications.*** “The drug and medical device industries want the FDA to allow them to give more information to payers and health-care professionals about off-label, or unapproved, uses of their products to help them make decisions. In comments to the Food and Drug Administration, industry groups said payers and health-care professionals want more information about the safety, effectiveness and value of treatments and while the labeling provides important treatment information, it doesn’t provide information that is learned about treatments over time. But consumer groups told the agency they are against loosening the FDA’s restrictions on off-label communications because doing so would put patients at risk. The industries were responding to a memorandum the FDA released in January laying out the issues.”
 - To read more: <https://www.bna.com/drug-device-industries-n57982087477/>
- ***Loneliness in seniors: A medical problem this provider thinks it can solve.*** “Clinicians are starting to look at the role that poverty, race, and other social determinants play in a person’s health, but what about social connectedness – how do friendship, family, and loneliness play into a person’s medical needs? Large health care systems have yet to take up the fight in a meaningful way, but that could be changing. On Monday, CareMore, a unit of Anthem Insurance that offers coverage and health care to more than 100,000 members across seven states, is introducing a campaign to help some of the US population’s most socially isolated people: seniors.”
 - To read more: <https://www.statnews.com/2017/05/08/loneliness-seniors-anthem-caremore/>

Hearings and Markups

Wednesday, May 10th

- The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will markup [S.1028](#), the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act; and [S.934](#), the Food and Drug Administration Reauthorization Act.
 - 10:00 a.m., G-50 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Thursday, May 11th

- The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies will hold a hearing on “[Veterans Choice 2.0: What Worked, What Didn’t and What Needs to Happen Next.](#)”
 - 10:30 a.m., 124 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Other Events of Interest

Thursday, May 11th

- American Enterprise Institute (AEI) panel discussion: “Is there a doctor – or a nurse – in the house? Scope of practice regulation and health care reform.”

- What if we could get a lot more of our medical care from trained health care professionals who are not doctors, such as nurses and nurse practitioners? A panel discussion on this issue of regulation, safety, and economic opportunity.
- Participants:
 - Timothy P. Carney, AEI
 - Cindy Cooke, American Association of Nurse Practitioners
 - Benedic N. Ippolito, AEI
 - R. Shawn Martin, American Academy of Family Physicians
- 12:00pm - 1:00pm ET
- [RSVP](#) to attend this event. To watch live online, click [here](#) on May 11 at 12:00 PM ET. Registration is not required.

Wednesday, May 17th

- CDC and Partners Free Continuing Education Webinar: “Sepsis Standard Work: Improving Compliance with Early Recognition and Management of Perinatal Sepsis”
 - Register now for this free webinar with continuing education hosted by CDC in partnership with the Society of Critical Care Medicine, the American Nurses Association, and the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses. Leading sepsis experts will discuss CDC's recent sepsis [Vital Signs](#) and protocols for early recognition of maternal sepsis.
 - Featured speakers:
 - Elizabeth Rochin, PhD, RN, NE-BC; Vice President of Nursing, Education and Practice; Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
 - Seun Ross, DNP, MSN, CRNP-F, NP-C, NEA-BC; Director of Nursing Practice and Work Environment, American Nurses Association
 - Sean Townsend, MD; Vice President of Quality & Safety, California Pacific Medical Center
 - Lauren Epstein, MD, MSc; Medical Officer, CDC's Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion
 - Katarina Lanner-Cusin, MD; Medical Director Women's Services, Sutter Health, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, Berkeley, California
 - Lori Olvera, DNP, RNC-OB, EFM-C; Bedside Nurse, Anderson Lucchetti Women's and Children Hospital; Kaiser Permanente
 - 11:00am - 12:00pm ET
 - Register and view the detailed agenda here: <https://cc.readytalk.com/r/6zd9diuewkfo&eom>