

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Weekly Capitol Hill Update - Monday, June 26, 2017

Congressional Schedule

House

- Today: "Meets at noon and plans to consider four bills under suspension of the rules" on veterans' medical certificates, community association disaster aid, active duty truck licenses, and coast guard laws and committees.
- Ahead: "Meets at 10 a.m. tomorrow, Wednesday and Thursday and 9 a.m. on Friday." (*Bloomberg Government*)

Senate

- Today: "Considers nomination of Kristine Svinicki to Nuclear Regulatory Commission."
- Ahead: "Aims for vote-a-rama overnight Thursday with early Friday final passage vote on health care legislation. Key test could be Tuesday, likely date of procedural vote if Senate is to wrap up bill by end of the week." (*Bloomberg Government*)

Legislative Updates

- **Week in Review:**
 - *How Senate Republicans Plan to Dismantle Obamacare.* "Senate Republicans on Thursday unveiled a draft of their plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, which they expect to vote on next week. The bill is similar to the one passed by the House in May, but it makes several significant alterations, including deeper cuts and structural changes to Medicaid, a program that insures one in five Americans, including two-thirds of nursing home residents."
 - To read more:
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/22/us/senate-health-care-bill.html>
 - *Trump Says Senate GOP Health Care Holdouts Are 'Four Good Guys'.* "President Donald Trump called four conservative holdouts who could wreck Senate Republican leaders' health care bill "good guys," saying there is a "narrow path" to win their support and pass the measure. Hours after Majority

Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and other GOP leaders briefed senators on then released a “discussion draft” of a bill that would repeal and replace the 2010 health law, GOP Sens. Rand Paul of Kentucky, Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, Ted Cruz of Texas and Mike Lee of Utah announced they could not support the bill as-is.”

- To read more: <http://www.rollcall.com/news/politics/senate-health-care-holdouts-are-four-good-guys-trump-says/>
- **House GOP Mulls Budget Plan, Agrees on Non-Defense Figure.** “House Republicans were still grappling with the Pentagon’s funding level and tying large spending cuts to a proposed overhaul of the U.S. tax system, putting in doubt a markup of a budget plan in the week of June 26. Party members gathered for the second time in four days in the basement of the U.S. Capitol June 23 to discuss the fiscal 2018 budget resolution and appropriations. While there was consensus on funding non-defense programs slightly below the Budget Control Act cap, lawmakers said, agreement on a number for defense and directives to be given to committees to find savings in programs in their jurisdiction remained elusive.”
 - To read more: <https://www.bna.com/house-gop-mulls-n73014460750/>

- **Week Ahead:**

- **Senate Republicans face key week as more lawmakers waver in support for health-care bill.** “Senate Republicans are facing down an increasingly daunting challenge to secure the votes necessary to pass legislation to dramatically change President Barack Obama’s signature health-care law, and several senators said they would like more time to debate and tweak the plan as GOP leaders push for a vote this week. At least five Republicans have already come out against their party’s bill – which can only afford to lose two votes – and over the weekend, more began expressing serious reservations and skepticism about the proposal.”
 - To read more: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/senate-republicans-face-key-week-as-more-senators-waiver-in-their-support-for-health-care-bill/2017/06/25/1724f3ec-59ba-11e7-a9f6-7c3296387341_story.html
- **Senate GOP revises health bill in hunt for votes.** “The Senate could vote “as early as tomorrow” afternoon or Wednesday on the first procedural vote on Obamacare repeal, Sen. John Cornyn told reporters Monday afternoon. The GOP whip acknowledged Republicans don’t yet have the votes on the motion, which would start debate on a bill that is still actively being revised. “We’re still working on it,” he said. “It’s very close right now.” Senate Republicans released a new version of their bill to repeal Obamacare earlier Monday and are preparing further changes to overcome deep opposition in the party toward last week’s initial effort.”
 - To read more: <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/06/26/republican-health-care-bill-revisions-239948>

Regulatory Updates

- ***CMS releases updated proposed rule for MACRA, eases burden on small and rural practices.*** “The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has unveiled a proposed rule that updates the Medicare physician payment system implemented under MACRA with changes to make it easier for small independent and rural practices to participate. The 1,058-page proposed rule (PDF), published in the Federal Register, aims to increase flexibility and reduce the burden on doctors and other clinicians by simplifying reporting requirements and offering support for them in 2018, the second year of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA).”
 - To read more: <http://www.fiercehealthcare.com/practices/cms-releases-updated-proposed-rule-for-macra-eases-burden-small-and-rural-practices>
 - [Federal Register Notice](#)

- ***Draft Order on Drug Prices Proposes Easing Regulations.*** “In the early days of his administration, President Trump did not hesitate to bash the drug industry. But a draft of an executive order on drug prices appears to give the pharmaceutical industry much of what it has asked for – and no guarantee that costs to consumers will drop. The draft, which The New York Times obtained on Tuesday, is light on specifics but clear on philosophy: Easing regulatory hurdles for the drug industry is the best way to get prices down.”
 - To read more: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/20/health/draft-order-on-drug-prices-proposes-easing-regulations.html>

Articles of Interest

- ***CBO: Senate GOP health-care bill would leave 22 million more people uninsured by 2026.*** “Senate Republicans’ bill to erase major parts of the Affordable Care Act would cause an estimated 22 million more Americans to be uninsured in the coming decade – just over a million fewer than similar legislation recently passed by the House, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The forecast issued Monday by Congress’s nonpartisan budget scorekeepers also estimates that the Senate measure, drafted in secret mainly by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and aides, would reduce federal spending by \$321 billion by 2026 – compared with \$119 billion for the House’s version.”
 - To read more: https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/imminent-cbo-report-could-prove-pivotal-for-senate-republicans-health-care-bill/2017/06/26/cb8d61e2-59f7-11e7-a9f6-7c3296387341_story.html

- ***Health insurer Anthem endorses Senate bill.*** “Health insurance giant Anthem Inc. endorsed the Senate GOP’s healthcare legislation Monday, saying it believes the bill will stabilize the individual market. The endorsement comes as doctors, hospitals, patient groups and even other health plans have slammed the legislation as harmful, and outside experts have warned it could destabilize the individual marketplace. “We believe the Senate discussion draft will markedly improve the stability of the individual market and moderate premium increases” because it appropriates billions of dollars in

short-term funding to shore up the exchanges, provides cost sharing reduction (CSR) funds, and eliminates a tax on health insurance plans, Anthem said in a statement.”

- To read more: <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/health-reform-implementation/339506-anthem-endorses-senate-health-bill>
- ***'Interlaced Fingers' Traces Roots Of Racial Disparity In Kidney Transplants.*** “While she was a primary care doctor in Oakland, Calif., Dr. Vanessa Grubbs fell in love with a man who had been living with kidney disease since he was a teenager. Their relationship brought Grubbs face to face with the dilemmas of kidney transplantation — and the racial biases she found to be embedded in the way donated kidneys are allocated. Robert Phillips, who eventually became her husband, had waited years for a transplant; Grubbs ended up donating one of her own kidneys to him. And along the way she found a new calling as a nephrologist — a kidney doctor.”
 - To read more: <http://www.wbur.org/npr/533966000/interlaced-fingers-traces-roots-of-racial-disparity-in-kidney-transplants>
- ***Nursing Home Workers Still Posting Nude and Vulgar Photos of Residents on Snapchat.*** “In the last year alone, employees of at least 18 nursing homes and assisted living facilities have posted unauthorized — and in some cases, vulgar and stomach-turning — photos and videos of residents on Snapchat and other social media platforms, a ProPublica analysis has found. Six incidents were in Iowa, which has put a greater focus on identifying such cases. Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, has called upon Snapchat and other social media companies to do more to stop the problem.”
 - To read more: <https://www.propublica.org/article/nursing-home-workers-still-posting-nude-vulgar-photos-residents-on-snapchat>
- ***Health systems playing catch-up on rising patient self-pay.*** “Hospitals and physicians are bracing for patients to start paying more for healthcare on their own thanks to high-deductible health plans or lack of insurance, according to a new survey of 125 health system chief finance officers and revenue cycle executives. More than 90% of survey respondents said the increase in consumer out-of-pocket costs will affect their organizations, and rural executives particularly were concerned about the impact, according to the Healthcare Financial Management Association/Navigant survey.”
 - To read more: <http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20170626/NEWS/170629927/health-systems-playing-catch-up-on-rising-patient-self-pay>

Hearings and Markups of Interest

None