

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Weekly Capitol Hill Update - Monday, June 5, 2017

Congressional Schedule

House

- “Not in session. Convenes at 2 p.m. Tuesday for consideration of measures (H Res 354, H Res 355) condemning the violence against protesters outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence on May 16 and condemning the attack in Manchester, UK, on May 22.” (CQ)
- “**Week Ahead:** The House will take up a bill (HR 10) to repeal large parts of the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial regulatory overhaul (PL 111-203).” (CQ)

Senate

- “Convenes at 3 p.m. to consider a resolution (S Res 176) related to Jerusalem, with a vote on adoption scheduled for 5:30 p.m.” (CQ)

Legislative Updates

- **Week in Review:**
 - *At home, GOP senators voice skepticism about passing a health-care bill.* “A pair of Republican senators voiced considerable skepticism this week about the prospect of passing a bill to revamp the nation’s health-care laws in the coming months, injecting fresh uncertainty into the GOP effort to fulfill a signature campaign promise. Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) sounded a deeply pessimistic note when he told a local television station he believes it’s “unlikely that we will get a health-care deal.” Earlier in the week, Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) said he doubted a bill could pass before the August recess.”
 - To read more: https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/at-home-gop-senators-voice-skepticism-about-passing-a-health-care-bill/2017/06/02/8288f880-47b9-11e7-bcde-624ad94170ab_story.html?utm_term=.f03e6dae3501/
 - *Pence presses Congress to pass healthcare by end of summer.* “Vice President Pence urged lawmakers on Saturday to pass a healthcare reform measure by the end of summer. Pence arrived at Sen. Joni Ernst's (R-Iowa) "Roast and Ride"

fundraiser in Boone, Iowa riding a Harley-Davidson motorcycle before taking the stage and launching into a campaign-style speech reaffirming President Trump's key promises. "Iowa is facing a healthcare crisis under ObamaCare and it's high time we take action," Pence told a crowd at the Central Iowa Expo, about 40 miles north of Des Moines."

- To read more: <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/336236-pence-presses-congress-to-pass-healthcare-by-end-of-summer/>

- **Week Ahead:**

- ***Republicans Return From Recess Under Health Care Time Crunch.*** "Republican senators return on Monday from a 10-day recess with immediate decisions to make on their quest to overhaul the 2010 health care law. While Senate leaders have largely avoided putting any artificial timelines on their endeavor, the GOP is under an extreme time crunch to produce and advance their own legislation to match the House bill that narrowly passed the chamber last month."
 - To read more: <http://www.rollcall.com/news/policy/republicans-return-recess-health-care-time-crunch/>
- ***Senate returns more pessimistic than ever on healthcare.*** "Senators went into a recess skeptical over whether they could agree to legislation repealing and replacing ObamaCare. They will return on Monday more doubtful than ever. Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.), one of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-Ky.) most loyal allies, said Thursday that it's "unlikely" the GOP will get a healthcare deal. "I don't see a comprehensive healthcare plan this year," he told a local news station."
 - To read more: <http://thehill.com/homenews/senate/336145-senate-returns-more-pessimistic-than-ever-on-healthcare/>
- ***GOP Leaders to Present Senate Republicans With Proposals to Shape Health-Care Bill.*** "GOP leaders are expected to present Senate Republicans options for the major policy decisions shaping their health-care bill during a closed-door lunch Tuesday, Senate GOP aides say. The proposals are expected to include a prolonged phaseout of the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion. There is also growing interest in possible steps to shore up fragile individual insurance markets, according to people familiar with the discussions."
 - To read more: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/gop-leaders-to-present-senate-republicans-with-proposals-to-shape-health-care-bill-1496691943/>

Regulatory Updates

- ***Dialysis Firms Get Help From Congress to Lift Charity Ban.*** "Members of Congress are pushing to revise an Obama-era rule that barred some dialysis patients from getting aid from industry-backed charities, a change that could also make it easier for kidney care companies to steer those patients into insurance plans that pay the companies better. Patients with end-stage kidney disease who need dialysis are typically covered under Medicare or Medicaid. Those U.S. government programs reimburse dialysis providers

including Fresenius SE and DaVita Inc. at lower rates than private insurance does. Before a 2014 rule, companies would sometimes help patients apply to industry-funded charities that helped finance patients' insurance premiums to get them into better-reimbursing private plans under Obamacare."

- To read more: <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-05-31/dialysis-firms-get-help-from-congress-in-overturning-charity-ban/>
- ***Medicare Starts Replacing Social Security Numbers on ID Cards.*** "Medicare beneficiaries are getting new ID cards soon that won't carry their Social Security numbers, the Health and Human Services Department said Tuesday. Congress had told HHS to get the cards replaced by 2019 to fight identity theft. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) said people will start getting new cards next April. "Personal identity theft affects a large and growing number of seniors," CMS said in a statement. "People age 65 or older are increasingly the victims of this type of crime. Incidents among seniors increased to 2.6 million from 2.1 million between 2012 and 2014, according to the most current statistics from the Department of Justice."
 - To read more: <http://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-care/medicare-starts-replacing-social-security-numbers-id-cards-n766226/>
- ***FDA advisory committee recommends approval of Pfizer's Epogen/Procrit biosimilar.*** "The U.S. Food and Drug Administration Oncologic Drugs Advisory Committee (ODAC) recommended approval of Pfizer's proposed epoetin alfa biosimilar across all indications. This marks the first time a biosimilar erythropoiesis-stimulating agent has been recommended for approval by a U.S. FDA Advisory Committee. The committee's favorable recommendation was based on its review of the evidence, including demonstration of comparable efficacy and safety of biosimilar epoetin alfa to its reference product, Epogen and Procrit (epoetin alfa)."
 - To read more: <http://www.nephrologynews.com/fda-advisory-committee-recommends-approval-pfizers-epogenprocrit-biosimilar/>
- ***Nurse Practitioner Demand Eclipses Doctors As States Lift Hurdles.*** "Nurse practitioners are more in demand than most physicians as states allow direct access to patients for these increasingly popular health professionals. Only family physicians, psychiatrists and internists are more in demand than nurse practitioners, according to the latest snapshot into the U.S. healthcare workforce from MerrittHawkins, a subsidiary of AMN Healthcare. Merritt's annual analysis of its database of more than 3,200 searches over a year's time shows nurse practitioners cemented in the top five most requested searches."
 - To read more: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brucejapsen/2017/06/04/nurse-practitioner-demand-eclipses-doctors-as-states-lift-hurdles/>

Articles of Interest

- ***California dialysis clinic staff ratio bill clears Senate, moves to state Assembly.*** "Legislation that would mandate staff to patient ratios in California dialysis clinics was approved by the State Senate on a 24-15 vote May 31 and received its first reading before the State Assembly on June 1. The Assembly's Health committee, the first to review the

bill, must take action on the bill by July 14. The latest version of the bill, called the Dialysis Patient Safety Act and introduced by Ricardo Lara, D-Desert Gardens, added a new 1 to 75 patient:staff ratio for dietitians. The bill already had ratios of 1 to 8 patients for nurses; 1 to 3 patients for patient care technicians, and 1 to 75 for dialysis social workers. Only one other state, Texas, mandates a staffing ratio for dietitians."

- To read more: <http://www.nephrologynews.com/california-dialysis-clinic-staff-ratio-bill-clears-senate-moves-state-assembly/>
- ***Insurance companies duck Obamacare repeal fight.*** "The once-powerful health insurance lobby – the same one that killed Hillarycare a generation ago and helped usher in Obamacare – can't pick a side in the latest battle over America's health care system. Some major members of the sprawling trillion-dollar industry, like Humana and Cigna, have little at stake in the fight. Other insurers heavily invested in the Obamacare markets, like the regional Blue Cross Blue Shield plans, are urging Congress to fix the 2010 health law instead of shredding it. And then there's Anthem, a rare industry voice supporting repeal."
 - To read more: <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/06/03/trump-health-care-bill-insurance-companies-239081/>
- ***States scramble to prevent ObamaCare exodus.*** "Insurance commissioners are pulling out all the stops to keep insurers from leaving their states amid uncertainty over ObamaCare's future. They are offering insurers new, previously unheard of flexibilities to try to keep them in the market. But the effort faces an uphill climb, given the Trump administration's wobbling over whether it will continue federal payments that compensate insurers for subsidizing out-of-pocket costs for lower-income households. There's also the question of whether Congress will repeal ObamaCare this year."
 - To read more: <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/336179-states-scramble-to-prevent-obamacare-exodus/>
- ***Meet the GOP senator who wants to bridge the Obamacare divide.*** "Sen. Bill Cassidy got cheers on late-night television for calling for an Obamacare replacement plan that would pass what he calls "the Jimmy Kimmel test" – that is, cover children like the comedian's son recently born with a congenital heart defect. But the first-term senator and physician is not seeing that support from his GOP colleagues. "He knows of what he speaks," said Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, the Senate's No. 2 Republican. "But we've got to find a way to get behind a consensus bill."
 - To read more: <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/06/04/cassidy-republicans-obamacare-divide-239099/>

Hearings and Markups

Wednesday, June 7th

- The Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing on the nomination of Eric Hargan to be Department of Health and Human Services deputy secretary.
 - 10:00 a.m., 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building

- The House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee will hold a hearing titled “Promoting Integrated and Coordinated Care for Medicare Beneficiaries.”
 - 2:00 p.m., 1100 Longworth House Office Building

Thursday, June 8th

- The Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing on the Department of Health and Human Services FY 2018 budget proposal with Secretary Tom Price.
 - 10:00 a.m., 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building
- The House Energy and Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee will hold a hearing titled “Examining the Role of the Department of Health and Human Services in Health Care Cybersecurity.”
 - 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn House Office Building
- The House Ways and Means Committee will hold a hearing on the Department of Health and Human Services FY 2018 budget proposal with Secretary Tom Price.
 - 1:00 p.m., 1100 Longworth House Office Building