

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Weekly Capitol Hill Update - Monday, September 11, 2017

Congressional Schedule

Senate

- Senate meets at 3pm; has scheduled 5:30pm cloture vote on motion to proceed to the defense authorization measure for 2018; Senators will be using the House-passed bill H.R. 2810 as the vehicle

House

- House canceled votes for Monday due to large number of absences as a result of Hurricane Irma, according to Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy's office
- First votes of the week expected Tuesday evening, last votes still expected to take place Thursday

Legislative Update

- **Week in Review**
 - *Senators Float Broader Effort on Health Care Costs in Bipartisan Talks.* "A Senate panel's bipartisan push to bolster the Affordable Care Act in the near term could set the stage for broader changes that would contain U.S. health care spending, which has been growing at a faster rate for decades compared to many other industrialized countries. After years of Republicans and Democrats fighting over the ACA, members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee have teamed up in a crunch-time attempt to stabilize health insurance marketplaces by the end of September, following the Senate GOP's failed effort in July to repeal Obamacare."
 - To read more: <https://morningconsult.com/2017/09/07/senators-float-broader-effort-health-care-costs-bipartisan-talks/>
 - *Senate GOP accepting defeat on Obamacare repeal.* "Senate Republicans are throwing cold water on the idea of holding another Obamacare repeal vote before their opportunity to gut the law on a party-line vote expires at the end of this month. Though President Donald Trump and some Senate Republicans are pushing a plan being devised by Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Bill Cassidy (R-La.) to block grant federal health care funding to the states and keep much of

Obamacare's taxes, the idea of passing the measure by month's end appears almost impossible, according to senators and aides."

- To read more: <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/07/obamacare-repeal-republicans-defeat-242443>

- ***Orrin Hatch, Ron Wyden signal long Senate reauthorization for child insurance program.*** "Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, told reporters he would be in favor of extending the Children's Health Insurance Program for five years in a move sure to please Democrats and program supporters. The statement came after a hearing of the Senate Finance Committee, which Hatch chairs, on the fate of CHIP, which needs to be reauthorized by the end of this month. Several witnesses at the hearing said that the program should to be reauthorized for five years to provide more certainty for families and states. The last time CHIP was reauthorized was in 2015."
- ***CA Patients, Workers Push Bill to Reform Dialysis Treatment.*** "Dialysis centers up and down the state are drawing protests this week from patients and health-care workers who support a bill to require clinics to improve patient care. Senate Bill 349 would mandate higher staffing levels and annual state inspections of dialysis clinics. Sean Wherley, the spokesperson for the union that represents some dialysis workers, says the bill would also enforce a 45-minute transition period between patients, so they can wait for their blood pressure to return to normal and the staff has time to properly disinfect the equipment."
 - To read more: <http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2017-09-08/health-issues/ca-patients-workers-push-bill-to-reform-dialysis-treatment/a59361-1>

- **Week Ahead**

- ***Senate panel looks to quickly strike deal on ObamaCare fix.*** "The Senate Health Committee is aiming to reach a deal in the coming week on a bipartisan bill aimed at stabilizing ObamaCare's shaky insurance markets. However, timing is a challenge if Congress wants to have an impact on premiums and insurer participation in 2018. Insurers must sign contracts by the end of September to participate next year, meaning Congress would have to pass a bill before that deadline. But there are still disagreements over the specifics of the bill, which Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and ranking member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) hope to work out by the end of the week."
 - To read more: <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/349807-week-ahead-senate-health-committee-looks-to-strike-a-deal-on-obamacare-fix>
- ***Sanders to unveil 'Medicare for all' bill on Wednesday.*** "Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) will unveil his "Medicare for all" bill on Wednesday, his office announced Friday. The announcement comes as single-payer health care is gaining as a force within the Democratic Party, and Sanders's formal announcement will move the issue further into the spotlight. Sanders made single payer a driving force of his campaign for president last year, and is now keeping up the push."

- To read more: <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/349830-sanders-to-unveil-medicare-for-all-bill-on-wednesday>
- **House Freedom Caucus chair open to ObamaCare deal.** “House Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) said Friday that he could support a bill aimed at stabilizing ObamaCare and making key payments under the law if conservatives got enough in return. Namely, Meadows told reporters that he could support a bill funding the payments known as cost-sharing reductions (CSRs) if in return states were given enough flexibility through waivers to repeal certain ObamaCare regulations.”
 - To read more: <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/349802-house-freedom-caucus-chair-open-to-obamacare-deal>

Regulatory and Administration Update

- **2017 Hurricane Irma:** “CMS is helping states and U.S. territories to maintain access to care for those with Medicare and Medicaid by supporting the ability of participating hospitals and other healthcare facilities to provide timely care to as many people impacted by the storm as possible. The President declared a state of emergency for Florida and the HHS Secretary declared a Public Health Emergency for Florida, which allows for CMS programmatic waivers based on Section 1135 of the Social Security Act. The September 7, 2017 Florida Public Health Declaration and the September 7, 2017 Social Security Act waiver for Florida may be found and in the Downloads section below. The Public Health Declaration and the Social Security Act waiver for Florida are effective as of 4:00 on September 9, 2017.”
 - To read more: <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/Hurricanes.html>
- **CMS Continues Helping Texas and Louisiana with Hurricane Harvey Recovery.** “Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma today announced new guidance to support people who are impacted by the loss of their durable medical equipment and supplies due to Hurricane Harvey. The ongoing response from CMS is focused on helping Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, providers, facilities and the general public with their immediate needs and ensuring access to healthcare services and resources are not interrupted throughout the recovery. Today, the agency finalized new guidance for Fee for Service (FFS) Medicare beneficiaries who have lost or realized damage to their durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) as a result of Hurricane Harvey. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, M.D., established a waiver under section 1135 of the Social Security Act that allows CMS to temporarily suspend the face-to-face requirement, a new physician’s order, and new medical necessity documentation for replacement due to loss or damage from the hurricane. This action will help to make sure that beneficiaries can continue to access the needed medical equipment and supplies they rely on each day.”
 - To read more: <https://www.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Press-releases/2017-Press-releases-items/2017-09-07.html>

Articles of Interest

- ***Disaster Preparedness for Dialysis Patients.*** “If you are a dialysis patient, it’s especially important to take steps to make sure you’re ready if disaster strikes. We can’t always predict when something will happen to derail our treatment plans. There are some simple steps you can take to make sure you are prepared and have access to the things you need to stay healthy in the event of a disaster.”
 - To read more: <http://www.kidneyfund.org/kidney-today/disaster-preparedness-for-dialysis-patients.html?referrer=https://t.co/lagVS4ZsMC>
- ***Kidney Community Emergency Response.*** KCER’s website includes emergency alert updates for patients and professionals affected by Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma.
 - For more details: <http://www.kcercoalition.com/>
- ***Hurricanes and Dialysis: Lessons Learned.*** “In this study, conducted approximately 1 year after Hurricane Katrina made landfall, almost 1 in 4 hemodialysis patients had PTSD. Many subpopulations, including blacks and patients more recently initiating treatment for ESRD, were more likely to have PTSD symptoms. Additionally, hemodialysis patient evacuation experiences were associated with having PTSD. This finding indicates the need for improved preparation and emergency plans for hemodialysis patients. Staff at dialysis facilities need to be aware of the high PTSD symptom burden and coordinate interventions for patients who have PTSD after future disasters.”
 - To read more: <https://ajkdblog.org/2017/09/06/hurricanes-and-dialysis-lessons-learned/>
- ***Longest-surviving person with kidney failure passes away.*** “Professor Robin Anthony Jeffrey Eady MBE, was a British dermatologist and the world’s longest surviving kidney patient after receiving dialysis from the 1960s.”
 - To read more: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/obituary-robin-eady-72vx772gj>

Events

Tuesday, September 12th

- The Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing on, “Health Care: Issues Impacting Cost and Coverage.”
 - 10:00 am @ 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building
- The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee will hold a hearing on, “Stabilizing Premiums and Helping Individuals in the Individual Insurance Market for 2018: State Flexibility.”
 - 10:00 am @ 430 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Thursday, September 14th

- The Energy and Commerce Committee will hold a hearing on, “Supporting Tomorrow’s Health Providers: Examining Workforce Programs Under the Public Health Service Act.”
 - 10:00 am @ Rayburn House Office Building
 - District Policy Group Staff will be monitoring this hearing.
- The Senate HELP Committee will hold a hearing on, “Stabilizing Premiums and Helping Individuals in the Individual Insurance Market for 2018: Health Care Stakeholders.”
 - 10:00 am @430 Dirksen Senate Office Building