

TODAY IN WASHINGTON - MARCH 18, 2020: COVID-19 UPDATES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 UPDATE

Note - We believe this is the most up-to-date information available at this time, but it is subject to change as circumstances warrant. Also, all finalized resources can be found on the [COVID-19 Resource Center page of Hall Render's website](#).

CONGRESSIONAL OUTLOOK

- Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) reversed course and the Senate passed the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act** without making any changes to the House-passed version. President Trump is expected to sign the measure into law as early as tonight. McConnell had indicated that he might combine the measure with a third economic stimulus bill being drafted in the Senate.
- The Trump administration is pushing for the third economic stimulus package to provide over \$1 trillion in relief. The measure is expected to include billions of dollars for a number of industries, including hospitals and health systems. A draft of the bill could begin circulating as early as tomorrow. McConnell has said the Senate will not adjourn until a third bill is passed.
- Hall Render has learned that Senate HELP Committee Chair Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and House Energy & Commerce Chair Frank Pallone (D-NJ) are trying to tack their surprise medical bill legislation onto the third coronavirus stimulus package. Their proposal relies on a benchmark payment rate before moving to arbitration for out-of-network charges.
- Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) introduced the Senate Democrats proposal for the next COVID-19 legislative package. Included in the legislation is \$400 billion of emergency appropriations to boost the number of hospital beds in the U.S., expand the availability of medical supplies, and to “ensure affordable care” for people with Covid-19. Senator Schumer’s PowerPoint presentation summarizing the Democratic bill is attached.

FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

- The Trump Administration issued an **executive order** to invoke the Defense Production Act to increase the domestic production of medical supplies necessary for COVID-19 response. The Act is a Korean War-era law that authorizes presidents to take extraordinary action to force American industry to ramp up production of equipment needed for national security. In this case, the administration could use it to force factories to ramp up production of medical supplies like ventilators, respirators and other protective gear for health care workers.

NEWLY RELEASED MATERIALS

- On 3/18/2020, CMS updated the **Frequently Asked Questions** for State Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance.
- On 3/18/2020, HHS **announced** a new public-private partnership to develop U.S.-based, high speed drug packaging solutions.
- On 3/18/2020, the Health Resources and Services Administration **announced** an information collection effort to survey HRSA-funded health centers on their involvement in the COVID-19 response.
- On 3/18/2020, CMS **posted** transcripts and audio for the COVID-19 Stakeholder calls.

NON-ESSENTIAL ELECTIVE CARE

- CMS Administrator announced today that the U.S. will soon issue guidance to hospitals urging them to limit “non-essential” elective medical procedures.

FDA RELAXES CLINICAL TRIAL RULES

- For the COVID-19 outbreak, the FDA issued **guidance** today to help drug and device companies manage clinical trials during this public health emergency.

CDC RELEASES U.S. HOSPITALIZATION REPORT

- On 3/18/2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a **report** on COVID-19 patient hospitalizations.

For more information, please contact:

- John Williams III at (202) 370-9585 or jwilliams@hallrender.com;
- Andrew Coats at (202) 370-9587 or acoats@hallrender.com;
- Abby Kaericher at (202) 780-2989 or akaericher@hallrender.com; or
- Your regular Hall Render attorney.

To access Hall Render's COVID-19 resource page and hotline, click [here](#).