

Below is this week's government and legislative affairs update. All previous legislative guidance and other affiliate resources are stored via the [VillageMD Affiliated Practices COVID-19 Resource Center](#).

The Senate and the House started back to session this week.

On Capitol Hill:

- The Senate confirmed the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- Both the House and Senate took up debate about the National Defense Authorization Act.
- Senate Republicans are set to introduce their framework for a COVID-19 package on Monday, an unofficial summary shows that [details are few](#) however early reports indicate the following provisions will be attached:
 1. Liability protections for businesses as they bring people back to work
 2. Addressing the extension of the extra \$600 per week expanded unemployment benefits that are set to expire next week
 3. Increase funding for schools and COVID-19 testing
 4. Extending telehealth waivers
 5. Extending the Paycheck Protection Program
- This narrow proposal will be the opening to talks with the Democrats and much will change before the final package is announced before the August Congressional recess.
- Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Azar officially renews the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency which expires this week.
- Representatives Mike Thompson (D-CA), Peter Welch (D-VT), Bill Johnson (R-OH), David Schweikert (R-AZ) and Doris Matsui (D-CA) introduced the [Protecting Access to Post-COVID-19 Telehealth Act](#), which would address significant existing limitations on the permanent expansion of telehealth.
- The House Appropriations Committee advanced the Labor-HHS Funding Bill and issued its report with *Implications for Private Equity-Backed Healthcare Interests* including language that would require entities receiving Medicare Accelerated and Advanced Payments Program (AAP) funding to report if they are owned and/or controlled by a private equity sponsor. It would also direct the Secretary of HHS to consider requiring that these entities do not furlough staff or implement cuts to pay or benefits as a condition of receiving AAP funds.
- The House Ways and Means Committee Rural and Underserved Communities Healthcare Task Force [released](#) a [summary](#) of responses from a November 2019 Request for Information (RFI) seeking feedback on priority topics that affect the health status and outcomes of rural communities which will help the committee focus on addressing direct social determinants of health, enacting payment system reforms, strengthening technology and infrastructure, and reinforcing the workforce moving forward.
- President stated schools should prepare to reopen and announced new guidance for [re-opening schools](#) and new funding for students in the next COVID package.

In the news:

1. COVID cases up to 4 million in the U.S. (new records for infections), and 143,000 deaths.
2. Northern Virginia schools, in a reversal, announce they will go to 100% virtual school in the fall.