March 18, 2020

Dear Association Executives,

With many moving pieces of federal legislation and responses from the Administration, the National Council wanted to keep you updated with some of our latest policy intel. Please see a summary of the current movement in Congress below, and we will keep you updated as the situation evolves:

The Senate passed H.R.6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, also known as Phase II, at around 4:30 this afternoon. The package now heads to Donald Trump for his signature.

Leader McConnell’s staff has put out a template of next steps.  Staff have noted that they will move to Phase III now that H.R. 6201 has passed.  The Leader also has noted that for scheduling purposes the Senate we will stay in session until work on the Phase III bill is finished.

To that end, the Leader announced yesterday the creation of Republican-only task forces, which will be led by appropriate committee chairman, and that he will rely on the priorities put forth by these task forces before negotiating with Democrats:

* Small business liquidity
* Financial Assistance to Americans
* Aviation assistance
* Health care task force led by committees

With the House of Representatives not expected to return to Washington, DC until a package is ready, it is not clear how negotiations will proceed.  However, Senator Schumer has publicly called upon Leader McConnell to abandon his task forces and come to the negotiating table with the White House and House and Senate bipartisan Leadership.

The Administration has been making a range of announcements and requests to help response to COVID 19.  The following is a list of some key policies impacting the health care sector:

* President Invokes the Defense Production Act, which gives the Administration powers to utilize manufacturing capabilities to meet needs associated with COVID 19
* FDA issues [guidance](https://www.fda.gov/media/136238/download) on conducting clinical trials during the COVID-19 pandemic
* Request for more than $21 million in emergency funding for various DOT programs, as well as nearly $153 million to support TSA operations in response to the coronavirus pandemic
* Request for an additional $45.8 billion and the necessary authorities for CDC and NIH to address ongoing preparedness and response efforts.

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