CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE:

- **Paycheck Protection Program**: Last evening, by a vote of 40-57, the Senate failed to move to a standalone bill to extend funding for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) – 60 votes were needed to take up the bill. Five Senate Democrats joined Republicans in supporting the legislation (Senators Hassan, Jones, Peters, Shaheen and Warner). The bill totaled $258 billion and would have provided a second round of forgivable loans through the PPP to small businesses impacted by the pandemic.

- **Senate Skinny COVID-19 Package**: Today the Senate is expected to take up another version of a "skinny" coronavirus relief package. The legislation is nearly identical to the $650 billion measure that stalled in the Senate last month but totals only $500 billion. It includes funds for unemployment benefits, schools, and vaccine development. The $500 billion is offset by about $350 billion in savings from unspent funds and rescissions. This bill requires 60 votes.

- **House Stimulus Talks**: Yesterday’s deadline, set by Speaker Pelosi’s to decide whether a bipartisan COVID-19 aid package can be passed before the elections, came and went without any final agreement. Speaker Pelosi and Secretary Mnuchin talked again yesterday to continue to work out an agreement. Speaker Pelosi, when asked whether she thinks there can be a deal by the end of the week stated, “I hope so. That's the plan. There are plans for more talks this afternoon. Yesterday Senate Majority Leader McConnell cast doubt on the likelihood that a bipartisan relief bill can pass Congress before Nov. 3 and urged the White House not to cut any large-scale relief deal before the elections. McConnell further stated that "If a presidentially supported bill clears the House, at some point we'll bring it to the floor."

- **Supreme Court Nomination**: Senate Majority Leader McConnell said that the Senate will vote Monday to confirm Amy Coney Barrett for the Supreme Court. Senator McConnell has said Barrett has the votes to be confirmed.

NOTE: There was a question as to whether or not the Senate PPP Stand Alone Bill, which failed 40-57 on Tuesday, October 20th, would allow businesses who already received PPP funding the ability to apply for a second round of funding. Per the legislation, the CONTINUING PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM ACT, businesses would be eligible for a second draw of PPP funding EXCEPT FOR THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:

- Ineligible entities include: publicly-traded businesses; entities listed in 13 C.F.R. 120.110 except for entities from that regulation which have otherwise been made eligible by statute or guidance; businesses in financial services which received a Paycheck Protection Program loan in the first round of funding; entities affiliated with entities in the People’s Republic of China; and registrants under the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. The group discussed ideas to boost employee moral in the age of COVID-19 as the holidays are approaching.
   a. Several members stated that their businesses have identified meal services such as Uber Eats and Postmates that will deliver breakfast/lunch to employees participating in virtual meetings. These are ideas to turn typical breakfast and lunch meetings virtual, while still giving employees the benefits of a paid meal.
   b. For Halloween, one member outlined an idea where an employee is dressing up in a Halloween costume and each employee will have the opportunity to guess which coworker is in the costume. The winner will receive a prize. Pumpkin carving contests are still going on and pictures of the pumpkins will be shared virtually.
   c. Members are continuing to delay employee birthday, anniversary and holiday sessions through the end of the year.
   d. A special congratulations to Restek for celebrating 35 years of business!

2. Business Improvements
   a. Members are reporting their financials are beginning to return to pre-COVID-19 levels and so far, 2021 outlook appears to be holding strong.

3. ALMA Webinar
a. There was mention of a good webinar provided by the Association of Laboratory Managers on the topic of “Meeting the challenges of a multigenerational workforce.” [http://labmanagers.org/alma-2020-webinar-1-4/](http://labmanagers.org/alma-2020-webinar-1-4/)

4. COVID-19 Business Practice Meetings will move from biweekly to monthly on the 3rd Wednesday of every month. The next call will be 2pm Eastern on November 18th, 2020.