San Francisco Chronicle

Feds hit state on abortion coverage

Threat to withhold funds over insurance mandate

By Dustin Gardiner and Alexei Koseff

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration said Friday it will withhold potentially billions of dollars in federal funding for California if the state refuses to repeal a requirement that health insurers provide coverage for abortion.

Roger Severino, director of the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Health and Human Services, said a 2014 California regulation mandating that employers and private insurance plans offer abortion services violates a federal law prohibiting discrimination against providers that don't cover the procedure.

If the state doesn't change its approach within 30 days, the administration will move to cut off federal money for un Imperative health and human services programs, Severino said.

If China virus hits Bay Area, hospitals ready

By Erin Allday

The deadly respiratory virus that has infected nearly 1,500 people worldwide — including at least two people in the United States — has not reached the Bay Area, but public health and infectious disease experts are bracing for potential cases and ramping up to those most at risk of falling ill.

In California, 18 people ranging from 13 to 80 years old had been tested as of Friday, and no cases of infection had been confirmed, according to the state Department of Public Health. Nationwide, 63 patients have come under investigation in 22 states; two were confirmed positive and it tested negative, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Feds hit state on abortion coverage continues on A5

If China virus hits Bay Area, hospitals ready continues on A8

IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

Last word from Schiff — oust him or it won’t stop

By Lisa Mascaro, Eric Tucker and Zeke Miller

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration fought in Donald Trump’s impeachment trial that the president will persist in abusing his power and endanger American democracy unless Congress intervenes to remove him before the 2020 election.

“He is who he is,” declared Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Burbank, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee. He told the senators listening as jurors that Trump put the US relationship with Ukraine on the line in a way that benefited Russia just so he could take a political “cheap shot” at Democratic Joe Biden.

“You cannot leave a man like that in office,” Schiff said. “You know it’s not going to stop. It’s not going to stop unless the Congress does something about it.”

Trump is being tried in the Senate after the House impeached him last month, accusing him of abusing his power by asking Ukraine for politically motivated probes of Biden and other matters while withholding military aid from the U.S. ally that is at war withbordering Russia. The second article of impeachment accuse

by Reps. Adam Schiff and Zoe Lofgren are two of the House impeachment managers. The group of Democratic wrapping up opening arguments Friday.

Democrats’ impeachment prosecutor: Schiff grudging respect for the skill of his arguments.

Virus continues on A8

As churches close, land considered for new housing

By J.K. Dineen

Before St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church closed for good in December, its Sunday services were often lonely affairs.

One week there would be six worshipers, the next week seven. On Dec. 15, when the white wood-paneled building at 41st Avenue and Judah Street in the Sunset District held its final farewell service, just 20 congregants showed up to bid the church adieu, filling only the first few pews in the spacious sanctuary.

But the church’s next chapter could help address San Francisco’s housing crisis.

Supervisor Gordon Mar, who represents the Sunset District’s best bet for affordable-housing development. Mar’s office has also been in talks for a project at another church, Grace Dalen works in a planter box at St. Paul’s Far Out West Community Garden, which is still open despite the church’s closure.

More on the housing crisis: Keep up with The Chronicle’s coverage of housing, the Bay Area’s most troubling issue, at sfchronicle.com/bayareahousingcrisis

As churches close, considered for new housing continues on A8

A whole new calling for sacred ground

By J.K. Dineen

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Churches continue on A8

The Rev. Theresa Cho and Doug Janczak talk outside the now-shuttered St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church.

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BAY AREA

Pete Stark, a congressman for 40 years, dies at 88.

Lunar New Year: Here’s how to celebrate one of the most popular holidays in the world.

49ers guard was cut three times by Super Bowl teams.

Weather