

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Wednesday, January 20, 2021

The following information comes from directly from news sources including Bloomberg Government, Kaiser Health News, and other news sources.

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- 8am: President Trump, first lady Melania Trump depart White House for Palm Beach, Fla.
- Vice President Mike Pence, second lady Karen Pence attend Biden inaugural ceremonies

INAUGURATION

- 8:45am: President-elect Joe Biden, VP-elect Kamala Harris and their spouses attend church service at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle
- 10:30am: Biden, Harris arrive at U.S. Capitol
- 11:15am: Biden, Harris participate in swearing-in ceremony
- Noon: Biden, Harris sworn in as president, vice president; Biden delivers inaugural address
- 1:40pm: Biden, Harris review readiness of U.S. troops in a pass in review
- 2:25pm: Biden, Harris participate in wreath-laying ceremony at Tomb of Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Ceremony
- 3:15pm: Biden, Harris receive presidential escort to White House
- 5:15pm: Biden signs executive orders and other presidential actions
- 5:45pm: Biden swears in Day One appointees in virtual ceremony
- 8:48pm: Biden, Harris and their spouses attend inaugural program; Biden, Jill Biden appear on Blue Room Balcony at 9:55pm
- 7pm: Incoming Press Sec. Jen Psaki holds press briefing

CONGRESS

- 4:30pm: Three new Democratic senators will be sworn in after Biden, Harris take office; they are Harris' replacement Alex Padilla and Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, who were elected in Jan. 5 run-off elections in Georgia
 - Following swearing-in, Senate expected to designate Chuck Grassley as President pro tempore emeritus and Sen. Patrick Leahy as President pro tempore

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Biden to Unwind Trump Policies on Immigration, Health:** Biden plans to begin immediately unwinding Trump's policies on immigration, climate and other issues today with at least 15 executive actions, including moves to reverse U.S. withdrawals from the Paris Agreement and the World Health Organization, and stop construction of a border wall.
 - Biden will also sign orders revoking a permit for the controversial Keystone XL pipeline, imposing a mask mandate on federal property to combat the coronavirus

pandemic and ending Trump's travel ban against some predominantly Muslim and African countries.

- While some of the orders roll back unilateral measures Trump imposed, others -- including an extension of moratoriums on student loan payments, foreclosures and evictions -- are intended to address the health and economic crisis wrought by the pandemic.
- **Bloomberg Government: Cutting Drug Costs on IP Wish List:** Tackling high drug prices and patent applicant diversity data collection are among the issues the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office should prioritize in the Biden administration, according to former intellectual property policy personnel. Also on the list are hot-button items for the patent bar, including a patent eligibility overhaul and the constitutionality of judges on the office's administrative law tribunal, according to a document released by the Day One project and former IP policy makers.
- **The Hill: Biden Administration To Enforce Strict COVID-19 Guidelines For White House Staff: Report:** The incoming Biden administration is planning on enforcing far stricter guidelines to protect against the spread of COVID-19 in the White House than its predecessor, according to new guidance sent to staffers Tuesday. The guidelines, reported by Axios, say that staffers will be required to take daily coronavirus tests and wear N95 face masks at all times.
- **Bloomberg Government: Lawmakers Urge Rescinding Medicaid Guidance:** House Energy and Commerce Chairman Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) and Senate Finance Committee top Democrat Ron Wyden (Ore.) are urging the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to rescind Medicaid guidance that will make it harder for Biden to reverse changes to the public health insurance program for low-income Americans, signaling the Democrats may be worried about a lasting shift enacted by the Trump administration.
- **Bloomberg Government: World Health Organization:** Biden plans to take immediate steps to re-engage with the World Health Organization and send top U.S. medical expert Anthony Fauci to speak to the group in a strong repudiation of Trump's snubs during the coronavirus pandemic. The incoming administration plans to participate in the WHO executive board meeting this week, with Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, heading the delegation and speaking. Once the U.S. resumes its engagement with the WHO, the new administration will work with the body to strengthen and reform the group, according to a fact sheet released by the Biden transition team.
- **Modern Healthcare: Providers Await New HHS Coronavirus Grant Reporting Deadline:** HHS has yet to declare a revised deadline for healthcare providers to report their Provider Relief Fund grants after scrapping the original one late last week. The agency had originally planned to open its reporting portal on Jan. 15, 2021, with the first submissions required by Feb. 15. That all changed with Congress' passage of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act in late December, which poured another \$3 billion into the PRF pot and tweaked reporting requirements. HHS said it's reworking its rules so they're consistent with the law. Providers are generally happy about the change, said Aparna Venkateswaran, a senior manager with Moss Adams.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Taps Prelogar as Acting Solicitor General:** Elizabeth Prelogar, a Washington appeals lawyer who worked on the special counsel investigation into Russian election meddling, will serve temporarily as the top Supreme Court advocate

for the Biden administration, a person who has been briefed on the plans said. Prelogar will be appointed in the next day or two as deputy solicitor general and will serve as acting solicitor general until the Senate confirms the new president's nominee to fill the post permanently, said the person.

- **Bloomberg Government: Biden to Ask Surgeon General Jerome Adams to Resign:** Biden is expected to ask U.S. Surgeon General Jerome M. Adams to resign, after he is sworn in as president, per reports citing people familiar with the decision.
- **Modern Healthcare: Nursing Home Employment Continues Free Fall, Industry Prepares For Worker Exodus:** Even as overall healthcare employment has rebounded slightly, job numbers in nursing homes continue their downward spiral. After more than a decade of gradual losses, nursing home employment began a free fall in April as the novel coronavirus spread across the country. And it hasn't recovered. Nursing homes need more workers to handle the challenges of COVID-19, yet jobs remain vacant. Low wages, limited healthcare benefits and hard work make these jobs hard to fill, experts say. The added threat of contracting COVID-19 makes it even more difficult.
- **Bloomberg Government: Trump Revokes Lobbying Ban:** Trump revoked his administration's ethics pledge banning political appointees from lobbying their former colleagues in a late-night executive order issued in the final hours of his presidency. The move frees former administration officials to begin immediately lobbying federal agencies and employees. Trump did not justify his decision in the executive order, saying simply that his political appointees would "not be subject to those commitments after noon January 20, 2021."