

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, January 22, 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

- 9:30am: President Biden, VP Harris receive presidential daily brief
- Noon: Biden, Harris have lunch
- 2pm: Biden, Harris receive briefing on state of economic recovery
- 2:45pm: Biden delivers remarks on admin's response to economic crisis, signs executive orders
- 12:30pm: Press Sec. Jen Psaki, NEC Director Brian Deese hold press briefing

CONGRESS

- Senate meets at 10am; set to vote on Lloyd Austin to lead Defense Dept around 10:30am
 - Confirmation votes on Antony Blinken to be sec. of state, Janet Yellen to be Treasury sec. also possible

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The Hill: Advocacy Groups Call For Including Type 1 Diabetes Among Prioritized Vaccine Recipients:** Advocacy groups are calling on public health officials to prioritize vaccinating Type 1 diabetes patients in their COVID-19 vaccine distribution plans, citing new research on the risks of serious complications after contracting the virus. A group of 19 diabetes advocacy organizations recently sent a letter to top CDC officials requesting the federal agency recommend that individuals with Type 1 diabetes be included in prioritized vaccine populations.
- **The Washington Post: Biden Executive Order Seeks Stronger Workplace Safety Guidance From OSHA:** President Biden signed an executive order Thursday to direct federal regulators to issue stronger safety guidance for workplaces operating in the midst of the pandemic. The executive order on "Protecting Worker Health and Safety" seeks to reorient worker safety guidelines and enforcement at the Labor Department's workplace safety division — the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
- **Bloomberg Government: Return of Obama Staffers to Biden HHS:** Senior staffers from the Obama administration are returning to the Department of Health and Human Services, as the Biden administration takes the reins of a federal agency fighting a pandemic without any confirmed officials. Those new appointees include Anne Reid as deputy chief of staff and AJ Pearlman as chief of staff for the Covid-19 response.
- **Politico: 'Wartime Effort': Biden Signs Orders To Fight The Pandemic:** President Joe Biden signed 10 more executive orders on Thursday, invoking the Defense Production Act in a "wartime undertaking" to boost production of vaccine supplies while also requiring travelers to the U.S. to get a test before flying. After assailing Donald Trump's coronavirus

response as a candidate and throughout the transition, Biden laid out in more detail what he'll do differently as cases and hospitalizations continue to rise, with the U.S. death toll expected to reach half a million people within weeks. Biden said that the worst of the pandemic is yet to come and that it will take time for progress to be measurable.

- **Bloomberg Government: Biden to Have Hard Time Withdrawing Obamacare Waivers:** The Biden administration will have a tricky time walking back Trump-era waivers that allowed states to enact work requirements for Medicaid, switch program funding to a lump sum, and pull out of Obamacare's federally funded health insurance marketplace. With litigation over the waivers pending, Biden's HHS will have to not only act fast but be strategic in the reasons it gives for rescinding the Trump administration approvals.
- **Bloomberg Government: HHS to Mull Surprise Billing Rules:** Health-care costs could escalate depending on how the Biden administration writes regulations implementing a new law that prohibits hospitals and doctors from issuing surprise medical bills. The ban on those bills is included in the omnibus spending and virus legislation signed at the end of 2020 (H.R. 133). Starting in 2022, it will block health-care providers from billing patients in emergencies or for services from out-of-network caregivers at facilities in patients' insurance networks.
- **The Washington Post: Biden To Require Masks On Planes, Buses, Trains And At Airports:** President Biden signed an order Thursday mandating masks in airports and on many planes, trains, ships and intercity buses. His action comes on the heels of a Wednesday order — his first as president — requiring masks on federal property. Together, the two orders come as close to a national mask mandate as his federal powers may allow, leaving it to states and municipalities to require residents to wear masks at a local level.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Lilly Antibody Drug Prevents Covid-19 In Nursing Homes, Study Finds:** Eli Lilly & Co. said its antibody-based drug prevented Covid-19 among many residents and staff of nursing homes and assisted-living facilities, results that point to the drug complementing vaccines while inoculations increase. The drug, called bamlanivimab, reduced the risk of both staff and residents getting sick with Covid-19 by about 57% compared with a placebo eight weeks after receiving doses, Lilly said Thursday. The effect was more pronounced among residents, the company said, an 80% reduction in risk of Covid-19.