

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Tuesday, January 5, 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

- President Trump has no public events scheduled
- 2:15pm: VP Mike Pence holds a coronavirus task force meeting

### CONGRESS

- Senate returns Wednesday for Joint Session of Congress to certify election results
- House meets at noon; set to consider 5 bills

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **CIDRAP: Med Societies Ask That Healthcare Infection Penalties Be Suspended:** Warning that persistent staff and supply shortages in hard-hit hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to disruptions that could result in an increase in drug-resistant hospital infections, the heads of three US medical professional societies last week sent a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requesting a suspension of reimbursement penalties for healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). "As the number of COVID-19 cases surge, hospitals are becoming overwhelmed with more patients than can be managed with typical care standards," the presidents of the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA), the Society of Infectious Disease Pharmacists (SIDP), and the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) wrote in a Dec 28 letter to HHS Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan.
- **Stat: Pharma Rings In The New Year With 5% Price Hikes On Hundreds Of Medicines:** When it comes to prescription drug prices, what goes up often continues to go up – and 2021 is no exception. Each January, the pharmaceutical industry is known for raising prices. And this month, the median wholesale price increased 4.8% for 645 brand-name medicines in the U.S., according to a new analysis by 46Brooklyn, a market research firm.
- **Modern Healthcare: Some Drugmakers May Not Comply With HHS 340B Opinion On Contract Pharmacies:** HHS on Dec. 30 advised drugmakers that they must provide 340B discount prices to pharmacies that contract with covered entities, but the advisory opinion doesn't have the force of law. Eli Lilly and Sanofi have indicated the new opinion may not change their behavior. "We've reviewed the statement from HHS and we disagree with their conclusion. We continue to believe our 340B distribution program complies with all applicable laws and regulations, and we will continue to advocate for fixes to 340B that will help people access affordable medicines instead padding the bottom lines of hospitals and contract pharmacies that pocket discounts for themselves," an Eli Lilly spokesperson said in a written statement.

- **Bloomberg Government: Easier-to-Spread Variant Amps Up Vaccine Urgency:** An easier-to-spread variant of Covid-19 detected in the U.S. for the first time last week could intensify the virus's surge, if it hasn't already, boosting the urgency for a speedier, more effective vaccine push. Four states – New York, Colorado, California and Florida – have identified cases of the mutated strain that has been raging in the U.K. for months. And U.S. health officials say they don't yet know how far the variant may already have traveled in the U.S., or what it could mean for the future.
- **NPR: FDA Warns Health Officials Not To Mess With COVID-19 Vaccine Doses Schedule:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is warning health care workers that any changes to the authorized dosing schedules of COVID-19 vaccines currently being administered significantly place public health at risk and undermine "the historic vaccination effort to protect the population" from the coronavirus pandemic. The first and second doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are approved to be delivered within a 21-day window, while the Moderna injections should be spread over 28 days. When given at those intervals, both vaccines are about 95% effective, according to the respective drugmakers. But the FDA has heard suggestions that the number of limited doses could be stretched by cutting them in half, extending the length of time between doses, or mixing and matching vaccines in order to immunize more people against COVID-19.
- **The Hill: Moderna To Add 100 Million Doses To COVID-19 Vaccine Supply This Year:** Pharmaceutical manufacturer Moderna will increase its vaccine production from 500 million doses to 600 million for 2021 and allocate resources to hopefully produce one billion vaccine doses in total this year, the company announced on Monday. Previously, the company committed to 500 million doses of a COVID-19 vaccine for federal distribution.
- **CIDRAP: Allergists Offer Guidance On COVID-19 Vaccines For Those With Allergies:** The review, written by a team of US allergists, notes that despite some early reports of severe allergic reactions to the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, safety data from the phase 3 trials of both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are strong, and to date there have only been 12 reported allergic reactions to the vaccines across more than 2 million administered doses. But they recommend that those with a history of anaphylaxis to an injectable drug or vaccine containing polyethylene glycol or polysorbate speak with their allergists before being vaccinated.