

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, January 7, 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

- Trump has no scheduled public events
- NOTE: Trump was suspended from Twitter, Facebook, for the first time after he encouraged and supported rioters at the U.S. Capitol
 - Trump was required to delete certain tweets, which a Twitter spokesperson confirmed he had done, meaning he will regain posting privileges after a 12-hour suspension
 - Facebook said it was banning Trump from posting for 24 hours and extended the block to its Instagram photo-sharing service as well

CONGRESS

- Senate will next convene for business Jan. 19, has pro forma meeting planned for Fri. Jan. 8
- U.S. House plans next meeting for Jan. 11 in pro forma session
 - House Speaker Nancy Pelosi plans 1 p.m. press conference

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: What's on Democrats' Agenda:** Joe Biden won a huge boost with Democrats securing control of the Senate by the narrowest of margins, giving the president-elect a smoother path for advancing his nominees and legislative agenda.
 - Biden had promised that as a 36-year Senate veteran, he was uniquely qualified to restore bipartisanship to Congress. The narrow Senate majority already was going to put that pledge to a test, but the shocking scenes of political violence yesterday -- against the backdrop of Republicans challenging the legitimacy of Biden's victory - - showed just how much work he has ahead of him.
 - The incoming Biden administration will need some bipartisanship if it plans to advance an aggressive agenda that includes creating a more robust federal response to the coronavirus pandemic and a new stimulus package. That would be followed by higher taxes on corporations and people who make more than \$400,000 a year, along with planned efforts on climate change, infrastructure and racial justice.
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- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Names Garland:** Biden formally named Merrick Garland to be attorney general as he builds his law enforcement team. Garland is currently chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Biden also named Lisa Monaco to be deputy attorney general and Vanita Gupta as associate attorney general.
- **Bloomberg Government: Centrist Democrat Floats Return of Individual Mandate:** With Democratic control of both chambers, Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.) said her party may restore Obamacare's penalty for not having health insurance as part of a larger measure to improve on the health care law. "That is part of a conversation we're going to have to have about how we shore up the ACA," she told reporters yesterday. She said Democrats should look at how effective the penalty was before it was ended. "At the end of the day what we're trying to do is make sure every American has access to quality, affordable health care," Murphy said.
 - Republicans had effectively eliminated what's known as the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate as part of their major tax overhaul. That move led to a challenge of the legality of the ACA by GOP attorneys general currently pending at the Supreme Court.
- **Bloomberg Government: States Get \$22 Billion for Distribution, Testing:** States will receive an infusion of \$22 billion in the coming weeks to get the vaccine to more people and improve testing, the Department of Health and Human Services announced yesterday. About \$19 billion will be awarded for testing, tracing, and other actions to stymie the spread of the virus, according to the HHS. Another \$3 billion will be awarded to get the vaccine distributed, and funds will be delivered to states and cities based on their population.
- **The New York Times: Study Says Blood Plasma Reduces Risk Of Severe Covid-19 If Given Early:** A small but rigorous clinical trial in Argentina has found that blood plasma from recovered Covid-19 patients can keep older adults from getting seriously sick with the coronavirus – if they get the therapy within days of the onset of the illness. The results, published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine, are some of the first to conclusively point toward the oft-discussed treatment's beneficial effects.
- **The Hill: CVS Aims To Finish First Round Of Nursing Home COVID-19 Vaccinations By Jan. 25:** CVS is on track to finish giving the first of three rounds of COVID-19 shots in nursing homes across the country by Jan. 25, the company said Wednesday. The Trump administration is partnering with CVS and Walgreens to inoculate nursing home residents and staff against the coronavirus. The campaign launched Dec. 21, and is now underway in 49 states and the District of Columbia.