

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, January 8, 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 and Vice President Mike Pence have no scheduled public events

CONGRESS

- House next meets Monday for pro forma session
- Senate holds pro forma meeting at 10am; next convenes for business Jan. 19
- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer have called on Pence to invoke the Constitution's 25th Amendment and oust Trump from office after he incited a mob of protesters who attacked the Capitol on Wednesday

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Schumer's New Role Will Face Problems on Left and Right:** Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) is set to preside over the narrowest possible majority of the U.S. Senate, a task that will require him to keep his Democratic caucus united while luring Republican support for legislation central to Biden's priorities. Schumer rose to the pinnacle of Senate power on his capacity for political fundraising, heavily aided by ties to New York's lucrative financial industry. Now his success as incoming majority leader will hinge on building consensus in a chamber still reeling from Wednesday's mob violence and with Republicans divided over loyalty to Trump.
 - The storming of the Capitol prompted many Republicans to distance themselves from the president, who in the past was feared for his taste for retribution. The test for Schumer will be whether he can exploit Republicans' widening disaffection with Trump's divisive tactics. Once the Senate's 50-50 partisan divide is official, control will only be assured by incoming Vice President Kamala Harris's tie-breaking vote. The Senate has only been evenly divided three times before: in 1881, 1953 and 2001.
 - On most legislation, Schumer will need support from 60 senators to cut off debate and move to a vote, under Senate rules. Democrats will have a limited opportunity each year to fast-track a revenue-related bill to pass with just 51 votes. But even with legislation that requires only a simple majority, Schumer must either keep every Democrat on board or win over offsetting Republican support.
- **FierceHealthcare: ACA's Coverage Gains Decreased Income Inequality: Study:** Coverage gains made and subsidies offered under the Affordable Care Act reduced income inequality by more than 10% in 2019, according to a new study from the Urban Institute, a left-leaning think tank. The study, backed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and published in Health Affairs, found that for a typical person in the bottom 10th percentile of income, those who enrolled in a plan under the ACA saw their incomes increase by an average of 18.8%.

- Bloomberg Government: Biden’s Coronavirus Stimulus Plan:** Boosted by Democratic control of Congress, Biden is considering asking lawmakers to help suffering Americans in two steps: give them the balance of their coveted \$2,000 coronavirus payments, followed by a \$3 trillion tax and infrastructure package, Axios reported last night.

 - Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) is set to preside over the narrowest possible majority of the U.S. Senate, a task that will require him to keep his Democratic caucus united while luring Republican support for legislation central to President-elect Joe Biden’s priorities. Given the Senate’s 50-50 partisan divide -- once the Democratic victors in Tuesday’s Georgia runoff elections are sworn in -- control is only assured by incoming Vice President Kamala Harris’s tie-breaking vote. On most legislation, Schumer will need support from 60 senators to cut off debate and move to a vote, under Senate rules. Democrats will have a limited opportunity each year to fast-track a revenue-related bill to pass with just 51 votes. But even with legislation that requires only a simple majority, Schumer must either keep every Democrat on board or win over offsetting Republican support.
- Bloomberg Government: Democrats Face Risky Bid to End Trump’s SALT Cap:** Democrats will soon have the balance of power required to repeal Trump’s limitation on a prized tax deduction, but doing so will likely require a tricky procedural process and a politically fraught vote. There are few issues that have riled certain segments of the Democratic Party more than Trump’s cap on state and local tax, or SALT, write-offs. Repealing it, however, would require Democrats to vote for something widely seen as a tax cut for the rich at the same time the party is proposing tax increases to make the Internal Revenue Service code more progressive.
- Bloomberg Government: NIH Studying Vaccines’ Effectiveness on New Strains:** NIH scientists are studying whether Covid-19 vaccines will provide the same level of protection against new strains of the virus as they do against earlier strains, the agency’s lead scientist on coronavirus said.

 - At the same time, Kizzmekia S. Corbett, scientific lead for the coronavirus vaccines team at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said she’s “not as alarmed as the media would have us think” by the emergence of the new strains.
- New York Post: COVID-19 Patients Still Immune Eight Months After Infection: Study:** COVID-19 patients who have recovered still have significant immunity up to eight months after infection – a promising sign that there is lasting protection from the deadly illness, according to a new study. The paper, published Wednesday in the journal Science, analyzed blood samples from 188 patients mostly from San Diego who had contracted the virus. “There was a lot of concern originally that this virus might not induce much memory. Instead, the immune memory looks quite good,” co-author Shane Crotty, a researcher at the La Jolla Institute for Immunology, told MIT Technology Review.
- Modern Healthcare: Medicaid Expansion Has Saved Hospitals \$6.4M, Study Shows:** Hospitals in Medicaid expansion states have saved an average of \$6.4 million on uncompensated care since the policies took effect, with safety-net hospitals pocketing even more savings, according to a new study published in Health Affairs. Researchers from the Urban Institute on Tuesday reported that uncompensated care comprised 6% of total expenses for hospitals located in non-expansion states in 2017, double the amount for those located in states that had expanded the program.