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

- The president has no public events scheduled.

CONGRESS:

- The House returns this morning to continue consideration of the bipartisan infrastructure plan.
- The Senate is also in session, though no votes are currently scheduled.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Modern Healthcare: HHS Lays Out Surprise Billing Resolution Process In New Rule:** The Biden administration on Thursday laid out the process that out-of-network providers and plans can use to settle surprise billing disputes. The long-awaited rule implements a law passed by Congress last year banning providers from sending surprise bills to patients who unknowingly received out-of-network care. Under the interim final rule published Thursday, if an out-of-network provider and payer can't come to an agreement over payment during a 30 day "open negotiation," they may turn to an independent dispute resolution process.

- **Bloomberg Government: Congress Avoids Shutdown But Funding Hurdles Await:** Lawmakers must overcome major hurdles to reach a full government funding deal later this year, though they managed to avert a shutdown with a stopgap measure through Dec. 3. Senators voted 65-35 in favor of the continuing resolution yesterday, followed by the House’s 254-175 vote to pass the measure. Biden signed the bill into law later in the day.
  - The stopgap measure buys Congress some time, but it won’t be easy to strike a deal on all 12 annual spending bills over the next nine weeks. While lawmakers have made progress negotiating a bipartisan spending level for the military, there’s been no formal bipartisan, bicameral agreement on top-line spending levels for defense and nondefense programs.

- **Politico: Democrats Dial Back Drug-Pricing Plans To Win Over Moderates:** Top congressional Democrats are acknowledging for the first time that they’ll have to scale back their drug pricing plans to win centrist votes for their giant social spending package. Leadership may drop efforts to have the government directly negotiate the prices for medicines in private insurance plans and make fewer drugs subject to negotiations in Medicare, among the changes under consideration.
• **Bloomberg Government: Senate Confirms HHS Assistant Secretary Pick:** The Senate yesterday confirmed by voice vote Melanie Anne Egorin to be an assistant secretary of Health and Human Services. Egorin previously served as deputy health staff director for the House Ways and Means Committee. The Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on her nomination for the HHS post in June.

• **Modern Healthcare: HHS Kills Trump-Era 340B Rule Targeting Community Health Clinics:** The Health Resources and Services Administration has formally rescinded a proposed rule targeting community health clinics participating in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. The regulation, which President Donald Trump's administration proposed last year, would have required community health centers pass on the 340B discounts they get for insulin and Epi-Pens directly to patients. HRSA is pulling the regulation because of the "excessive administrative costs and burdens that implementation would have imposed on health centers," the agency wrote in a notice published in the Federal Register Thursday.

• **The Wall Street Journal: Medical Cost Disputes To Be Settled By Arbitrator:** Health insurers and medical providers who can’t agree on the cost of a treatment or service will soon be settling their differences through an independent resolution system that will render decisions that shape billions of dollars in healthcare spending. The Biden administration on Thursday issued an interim final rule establishing the architectural structure of the arbitration process, following years of lobbying by hospitals and insurers, and legislative wrangling over how to hammer out disputes over patient charges while protecting consumers from unexpected, large medical bills.

• **AP: Ban On 'Surprise' Medical Bills On Track For Jan. 1 Rollout:** The Biden administration on Thursday put final touches on consumer protections against so-called “surprise” medical bills. The ban on charges that hit insured patients at some of life’s most vulnerable moments is on track to take effect Jan. 1, officials said. Patients will no longer have to worry about getting a huge bill following a medical crisis if the closest hospital emergency room happened to have been outside their insurance plan’s provider network. They’ll also be protected from unexpected charges if an out-of-network clinician takes part in a surgery or procedure conducted at an in-network hospital. In such situations, patients will be liable only for their in-network cost sharing amount.