

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, October 21, 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

- Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris deliver remarks at the 10th anniversary celebration of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial shortly before noon.
- At 6:45 p.m., Biden and First Lady Jill Biden will travel to Baltimore, where Biden will participate in a CNN town hall at 8 p.m.
- The Bidens will return to the White House by 10:30 p.m.

CONGRESS:

- The House is scheduled to vote on a resolution recommending the chamber find former Trump administration adviser Steve Bannon in contempt of Congress for refusal to comply with a subpoena.
- Senators plan to vote on Biden judicial and Labor Department nominees.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Nursing Homes Fear Financial Blow From Expanded Home Care Bill:** The nursing home industry, still reeling from Covid-related declines in patients and revenue, could be facing yet another financial hit. About 1 in 5 beneficiaries in traditional Medicare recuperate in nursing homes after being released from hospitals. But some could recover at home for far less money under bipartisan legislation recently introduced in the House by Reps. Henry Cuellar (D-Texas) and James Comer (R-Ky).
 - The “Choose Home Recovery Act of 2021” would save Medicare more than \$4,600 per beneficiary by allowing home health agencies to provide expanded nursing services in the home for up to 30 days for eligible Medicare patients, according to a study commissioned by the Partnership for Quality Home Healthcare.
- **Modern Healthcare: CMS Focuses On Health Equity, Accountable Care In Its New Strategic Plan:** For its second decade in operation, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Innovation Center is implementing strategies to drive healthcare transformation, using demographic data, industry feedback and more accessible payment models. In a Wednesday webinar, CMS leaders outlined the agency's five new objectives and how they will advance health equity, expand coverage and improve health outcomes going forward. Driving accountable care: The first goal guiding the agency's work is to increase the number of people in relationships with providers that are accountable for patients' costs and improving their

care history, said Dr. Liz Fowler, CMS Innovation Center director, during the virtual conference.

- **Bloomberg Government: Medicare Innovation Center Charts New 10-Year Course:** The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation charted its strategic direction for the next 10 years, releasing a white paper that outlines a variety of goals to improve and expand health-care delivery across federal programs. The Strategy Refresh by the innovation center, which develops unique health-care payment and delivery models for Medicare and Medicaid, plans to focus on accountable care, health equity, innovations, and more.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Has Few Tools, Clock Ticking on Supply Chain:** A supply-chain crunch that stretches from overseas manufacturers into American ports and retail stores threatens the U.S. holiday shopping season. Biden and his administration have been working for months to smooth out bottlenecks, but his power to influence what is almost entirely a private-sector problem is limited.
 - While Republicans point to the supply chain as further evidence the president is mismanaging the economy, the issues are deep-rooted. Overwhelming volume generated by record, pandemic-induced consumer demand is swamping a system that was already creaking under the weight of high demand, low investment, labor shortages and regulatory battles.
 - Republicans are blaming Biden's focus on his spending plan for prolonging backlogs at ports and shortages of goods. A group of 160 House Republicans sent a letter to Biden yesterday calling for an end to negotiations on Democrats' social spending and tax package and for the administration to instead focus on the nation's supply chain troubles. The backup at U.S. ports has become a main issue for lawmakers from both parties this week.
- **AP: Big Changes In White House Ideas To Pay For \$2 Trillion Plan:** In an abrupt change, the White House on Wednesday floated new plans to pay for parts of President Joe Biden's \$2 trillion social services and climate change package, shelving a proposed big increase in corporate tax rates though also adding a new billionaires' tax on the investment gains of the very richest Americans. The reversal came as Biden returned to his hometown of Scranton, Pennsylvania, to highlight the middle class values he says are at the heart of the package that Democrats are racing to finish. Biden faces resistance from key holdouts, including Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., who has not been on board with her party's plan to undo Trump-era tax breaks to help pay for it.
- **KHN: Worn-Out Nurses Hit The Road For Better Pay, Stressing Hospital Budgets – And Morale:** In parts of the country where covid-19 continues to fill hospitals, a rotating cast of traveling nurses helps keep intensive care units fully staffed. Hospitals have to pay handsomely to get that temporary help, and those higher wages are tempting some staff nurses to hit the road, too. Nearly two years into the pandemic, there's some truth in a joke circulating among frustrated ICU nurses: They ask their hospitals for appropriate compensation for the hazards they've endured. And the nurses are rewarded with a pizza party instead.
- **Stat: FDA Authorizes Booster Shots Of Moderna, Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 Vaccines:** Many Americans who have been vaccinated against Covid-19 will soon be able to choose which vaccine they would like as a booster after the Food and Drug Administration issued

emergency authorizations Wednesday that throw open the door to mixing and matching of vaccine brands. In newly issued emergency use authorizations for the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines — and in a revision to the previous authorization of the Pfizer and BioNTech booster — the agency made clear that people do not have to get a third dose that matches their primary series.

- **ABC News: Largest Nurses Union Applauds Possible OSHA Action Against 3 States Over PPE:** The country's largest nurses' union praised the federal government on Wednesday after officials said three states tasked with implementing their own safety measures for health care workers would lose that right unless they adhered to agreed-upon guidelines. The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration had announced Tuesday it was considering stripping Arizona, Utah and South Carolina of their abilities to oversee workplace safety enforcement because they're not in compliance with an emergency standard order passed over the summer that guarantees certain protections.