

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, October 4, 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

- The president delivers remarks at 11:15am EST regarding the need to raise the debt ceiling.
- Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki at 1:00pm EST.

CONGRESS:

- The Senate is likely to hold a procedural vote on a measure to suspend the debt limit.
- The House does not have any floor activity scheduled for this week or next.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Progressives Offer to Cut Spending Short:** House progressives looking for ways to rescue Biden's stalled domestic agenda opened the door to scaling back some of the more ambitious social spending by having those programs expire rather than be permanent. "One of the ideas out there is to fully fund what we can fully fund, but instead of funding it for 10 years, fund it for five years," Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), a leading progressive voice, told CBS.
 - Progressives say they're willing to compromise – within limits. The chairwoman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus flatly rejected Sen. Joe Manchin's (D-W.Va.) offer of \$1.5 trillion in social spending. "That's not going to happen," Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) said on CNN. "That's too small to get our priorities in."
- **Modern Healthcare: Surprise Billing Rule Has Providers Fuming Over Insurer-Friendly Policies:** Providers are crying foul about a regulation from the Biden administration that lays out the process they can use to settle out-of-network billing disputes with payers. The rule, released Thursday by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, is the next step in its implementation of the surprise billing ban passed last year by Congress. Payers praised the regulation as the "right approach," while providers swiftly denounced it as a "miscue" arbitrarily favoring insurers. At issue is the part of the regulation that lays out the independent dispute resolution process used when there is a disagreement between providers and payers over the fair price for an out-of-network service.
- **KHN: What The Stalemate On Capitol Hill Means For Your Drug Prices:** As President Joe Biden's government overhaul stalls in Congress, tensions are mounting over what changes – if any – could come for Americans at the pharmacy counter. The proposals in flux range from tinkering with tax credits to far-reaching changes in federal payments systems.

- **The Hill: Democrats Offer Array Of Options For Passing Stalled Infrastructure, Reconciliation Bills:** Democratic lawmakers on Sunday offered numerous options for pathways for the potential to pass the stalled infrastructure bill and reconciliation package after failing to bring either key measures of the Biden administration to a vote in the House last week. Some lawmakers said they were confident that they would be able to pass both measures while others, including some progressives who refused to vote for the bipartisan bill unless they could pass the larger reconciliation package first, suggested they'd be open to a smaller price tag or a shorter amount of years of funding social programs. House Democrats failed to bring either bill up for a vote last week as moderate lawmakers like Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) refused to budge from their demands of a lowered reconciliation package.
- **Politico: Limiting Medicare Benefits Deepens Rift Among Hill Democrats:** Means-testing Medicare, a long-running controversy in health policy debates, is re-emerging as a major source of tension for Democrats seeking a path forward on their stalled social spending package. Centrist lawmakers are demanding that an expansion of the program to cover dental, vision and hearing care be limited to the poorest Americans, to pare the projected cost by as much as half.
- **Bloomberg Government: More Hospitals Warned on Price Transparency:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have issued about a hundred more warnings to hospitals deemed out of compliance with its price transparency rule, up from about 165 in July to roughly 256 as of late September. Hospitals are required to disclose their typical charges for items and services under a Trump-era final rule that the Biden administration has doubled down on in a proposed rule.