

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Tuesday, October 5, 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 arrives in Lansing, Michigan at 1:20pm EST
- The President to deliver remarks on the bipartisan infrastructure bill and his Build Back Better agenda at 3:30pm EST

### CONGRESS:

- The Senate is scheduled to vote on Biden’s nominee to be deputy administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, followed by a vote on a judicial nomination.
- The House has no floor votes scheduled, and will hold a pro forma session.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Modern Healthcare: GAO Highlights Provider Complaints About MIPS:** A new government watchdog report offers more doubt about the effectiveness of a heavily criticized Medicare provider payment program. The Merit-based Incentive Payment System scores physicians and other providers based on quality and cost measures uses those scores to adjust future Medicare payments. Congress and President Barack Obama established MIPS in a 2015 law intended to improve outcomes and reduce spending. MIPS lets providers cherry-pick the measures they report and doesn't yield enough of a payoff to be worth participating in, said most stakeholders the Government Accountability Office interviewed for an analysis published Friday.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Tells Progressives He’s Open to Means-Testing Programs:** Biden told a group of progressives and members of the House leadership yesterday that he is open to setting income limits for some of the programs in his social-spending bill, to lower the price tag, according to a person familiar with the discussion.
  - During the virtual meeting, Biden also reiterated that he expects the legislation – which could beef-up spending on health care, climate initiatives and increase taxes on the wealthy and corporations – would eventual fall in the range of \$1.9 trillion to \$2.2 trillion – down from the \$3.5 trillion originally proposed, the person, who asked for anonymity to discuss the private talks, said. Washington Representative Pramila Jayapal (D), head of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, said in a statement that the discussion with Biden was “productive and necessary,” but gave no details.

- **Bloomberg Government: Lawmakers' Face Daunting Agenda:** Lawmakers face an imminent deadline to address the debt limit. Meanwhile, House leaders scrapped a vote on the Senate-passed bipartisan infrastructure package as progressives called for action on the Democrats-only social spending package. Pelosi has called for a deal by Oct. 31, the new expiration date for surface transportation programs. Lawmakers also extended government funding and key programs such as flood insurance through Dec. 3, averting a potential shutdown and teeing up action on a year-end spending package.
- **Bloomberg Government: Senators Push Domestic Medical Supply Production:** A bipartisan Senate duo introduced a bill ordering the Health and Human Services "to maintain a voluntary list of domestic manufacturers to produce medical supplies during severe shortages, and create a streamlined process for U.S. manufacturers" to work with HHS to determine production capacity and technical assistance needs, a statement from Sens. Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.) and Bill Cassidy (R-La.) says, citing Covid-19 as a test of readiness.
- **Bloomberg Government: NIH Director Francis Collins Nears Retirement Announcement:** Francis Collins, the doctor and geneticist who has led the U.S. National Institutes of Health through three presidential administrations, is expected to soon announce plans to retire, people familiar with the matter said. The move would leave a key position to fill in the government's pandemic response team. An announcement is expected as soon as today, said two of the people.
- **FiercePharma: Researchers Retract Preprint Study That Miscalculated Higher Heart Inflammation Risk For Moderna, Pfizer COVID Vaccines:** In the past few weeks, anti-vaxxers have rallied behind a non-peer-reviewed study by a group of Canadian researchers as evidence against COVID-19 vaccines. Turns out, the paper made a fatal mistake in reaching its conclusion. Scientists at The University of Ottawa Heart Institute have retracted the preprint study, which falsely calculated a 1 in 1,000 risk of heart inflammation for Moderna's and Pfizer-BioNTech's mRNA COVID vaccines. The study authors have withdrawn the manuscript "because of a major error pertaining to the quoted incidence data," the team said in a retraction statement on Sept. 24.
- **Bloomberg Government: More States to Use Own ACA Enrollment Platform:** Kentucky, Maine, and New Mexico will transition to their own state-based health insurance marketplaces when the 2022 Affordable Care Act open enrollment period begins in November. The three states were among six that were considered to have state-based marketplaces in 2021 but used the federal HealthCare.gov website to determine eligibility and enroll people in individual coverage, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.