

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, October 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

- President Biden will sign two pieces of legislation at 10 a.m., legislation (S. 1828) that would allow the CIA and State Department to provide financial support to U.S. intelligence and diplomatic personnel and their family members who develop brain injuries; and legislation (S. 1917) would require the Homeland Security Department to analyze and provide guidance on cybersecurity risks facing K-12 schools.
- The president will speak at 11:30 a.m. on the September jobs report.

CONGRESS:

- House: No events scheduled today
- Senate: No floor schedule today

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Democrats Face \$2 Trillion Math Problem:** Congressional Democrats are beginning to discuss how to pare down their sweeping social-spending bill. Lawmakers have yet to coalesce around a list of priorities, or even begun negotiations with both moderates and progressives present – a hallmark of when a deal is close to being reached. Biden and White House officials, however, have held a series of meetings in recent days with key Democrats, including groups of liberal House lawmakers and key centrist Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.).
 - A third or more of the spending may need to be slashed from the House version of the bill. That version is estimated to cost at least \$3.5 trillion, but the official scorekeeper, the Congressional Budget Office, said yesterday it didn't know when it would have its calculation -- further complicating Democrats' discussions.
- **KHN: Organ Centers To Transplant Patients: Get A Covid Shot Or Move Down On Waitlist:** A Colorado kidney transplant candidate who was bumped to inactive status for failing to get a covid-19 vaccine has become the most public example of an argument roiling the nation's more than 250 organ transplant centers. Across the country, growing numbers of transplant programs have chosen to either bar patients who refuse to take the widely available covid vaccines from receiving transplants, or give them lower priority on crowded organ waitlists. Other programs, however, say they plan no such restrictions – for now.

- **Fox News: Unvaxxed Colorado Woman Speaks Out After Hospital Denies Life-Saving Transplant: 'My Days Are Numbered':** A Colorado woman who has stage 5 renal failure went on "The Ingraham Angle" Thursday to talk about being denied a kidney transplant due to her and her prospective donor's vaccination status. "I believe that my days are numbered as I continue to deteriorate in my GFR numbers," Leilani Lutali said. GFR, or glomerular filtration rate, measures how well the kidneys are functioning in filtering out toxins and waste from the blood. A number of 60 or higher is considered normal. Stage 5 is characterized by GFR numbers below 15, where the kidneys have almost or completely stopped their functioning. In September, the Colorado health system, UCHHealth, denied the transplant due to the fact that she had not received a vaccine, Lutali said.
- **Naples Daily News: Nurse Shortage: Hospitals Paying Double Pre-COVID Rates For Temp Staff:** Florida hospitals are facing skyrocketing costs for temporary contract nurses as the COVID-19 pandemic burns out longtime staff members and workforce shortages continue to worsen. As staffing agencies for travel nurses double and triple their fees to hospitals, the Florida Hospital Association is tracking complaints of price gouging in other states. California's hospital association last month asked the state Department of Justice to conduct a probe on behalf of its 400 hospitals.
- **Stat: FDA Halts Allogene Blood Cancer Trials After Abnormality Seen In Patient:** Allogene Therapeutics said Thursday that the Food and Drug Administration had placed a hold on its clinical trials after a patient with blood cancer treated with its off-the-shelf CAR-T cell therapy was found to have a "chromosomal abnormality." An investigation is underway to determine what might have caused the unexpected changes to the engineered T cells that make up the Allogene treatment, the company said. At this time, the clinical significance to the patient remains unclear.
- **Bloomberg Government: Care for Neediest Hangs in Balance in HHS Case:** Hospitals and university medical centers – in a case pivoting on how much authority a federal agency should have – are asking the Supreme Court to turn back drug reimbursement rate cuts they say threaten health-care services for America's most vulnerable populations. One side, the American Hospital Association and its supporters argue HHS overstepped its statutory authority when it slashed almost 30% in Medicare reimbursement rates paid to hospitals in the government's 340B drug discount program.
 - The aim of the 29-year-old program is to help hospitals and other facilities stretch their funds – optimally using the savings to expand services – by requiring pharmaceutical manufacturers taking part in Medicaid to discount their outpatient prescription drugs.