American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Monday, December 27, 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 will participate in a White House Covid-19 Response Team call with the National Governor’s Association at 11:30 a.m. to discuss the response to the Omicron variant.
- The president is scheduled to leave Washington for Rehoboth Beach, Del. shortly after noon and arrive after 1 p.m.

CONGRESS:

- The House meets for a pro forma session at 11 a.m.
- The Senate meets in pro forma at 4:30 p.m.
- No hearings or markups are scheduled.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- Bloomberg Government: White House Isn’t Giving Up on Economic Package, Harris Says: The Biden administration is seeking a path forward for its “Build Back Better” economic stimulus and social spending plan, Vice President Kamala Harris said yesterday.
  - “I’m not giving up, the President’s not giving up,” Harris said in an interview on CBS’s “Face the Nation.”
  - “Frankly the stakes are too high,” she said.
  - Biden’s signature bill hit the skids on Dec. 19 when Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) said he couldn’t support legislation with a price tag approaching $2 trillion. In an evenly divided Senate, Democrats need each member of their party to advance the legislation amid unified Republican opposition.
  - Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) said on “Fox News Sunday” that members of his caucus all want to pass a version of the bill. He also acknowledged that to garner support the legislation may end up being less comprehensive than some progressive lawmakers want.
  - “We’ve got to find that sweet spot,” Cardin said. “Look -- a lot of us are going to be disappointed, but we’re not going to let perfection be the enemy of getting something done.”

- Bloomberg Government: Fauci Warns of Complacency With Virus Set to Fill Hospitals: Americans should stay vigilant against the omicron variant despite evidence its symptoms
may be less severe because the volume of cases can still overwhelm hospitals, President Biden’s top medical adviser said yesterday.

- “The issue that we don’t want to get complacent about, Jon, is that when you have such a high volume of new infections it might override a real diminution in severity,” Anthony Fauci told ABC’s Chief Washington Correspondent Jonathan Karl on “This Week.”
- “So that if you have many, many, many more people with a less level of severity, that might kind of neutralize the positive effect of having less severity,” said Fauci, who leads the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.
- Preliminary data from Scotland shows that omicron “is associated with a two-thirds reduction in the risk of Covid-19 hospitalization when compared to delta.” However, the same study showed that it was 10 times more likely than delta to infect people who’d already had Covid.

- **Modern HealthCare: Providers Can ease Impact of Medicaid Redeterminations in 2022:** Regular Medicaid coverage redeterminations will likely resume in 20-22, so providers may see many patients lose or change coverage. While this could lead to uncertainty for providers and patients, healthcare entities can help connect patients with resources and guide them into alternate coverage and minimize disruptions in their care.