

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, February 11, 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

- 10am: President Biden, VP Harris meet with senators from both parties to discuss infrastructure
 - Transportation Sec. Pete Buttigieg joins meeting virtually; he's isolating after a member of his security detail tested positive for Covid-19
- 11:15am: Biden, Harris receive presidential daily brief
- 3:45pm: Biden visits Viral Pathogenesis Laboratory at National Institutes of Health
- 4:30pm: Biden delivers remarks to NIH staff
- 12:30pm: Press Sec. Jen Psaki holds press briefing

CONGRESS

- Noon: Senate impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump resumes
 - Democrats plan to finish presenting their case today and do not intend to use all 16 hours allotted to them, aides said

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Energy and Commerce Stimulus Markup:** The House Energy and Commerce Committee's stimulus proposal would make big changes to Medicaid. The committee plans to mark up the legislation today at 11 a.m. It also offers states the ability to claw back money from price increases of certain drugs.
- **The New York Times: College Student's Simple Invention Helps Nurses Work And Patients Rest:** During his day shift at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Anthony Scarpone-Lambert steps into a patient's room. The lights are off, but he knows he has to change the IV without disturbing the patient. He has two choices: turn on the overhead lights or attempt to use some sort of hand-held light to navigate in the darkness. It's this dilemma that he sought to fix by inventing what he and his co-founder call the uNight Light, a wearable light-emitting diode, or LED, that allows nurses to illuminate their work space without interrupting a patient's sleep.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Justice Department Flips Trump Stance on ACA:** Biden's administration told the U.S. Supreme Court the Affordable Care Act is constitutional, filing an unusual letter that flips the government's position three months after the justices heard arguments on the law. Trump's administration had argued against the health-care law, also known as Obamacare, when the justices heard the case Nov. 10. Opponents are trying to invalidate the entire law by pointing to a 2017 tax change that eliminated a penalty for not having insurance.

- **CIDRAP: COVID Associated With More Hospitalizations, ICU Care, Mortality Than Flu:** Hospitalized adults with COVID-19 are 3.5 times more likely to die than adults with the flu, reports a study today in CMAJ. The study also found that those with COVID were 1.5 times more likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) and have 1.5 times longer hospital stays. The researchers collected data from seven hospitals in Toronto and Mississauga in Canada and found that, from November 2019 through June 2020, 763 patients were admitted 783 times with the flu and 972 patients were admitted 1,027 times with COVID-19 – the latter making up 23.5% of all hospitalizations during the study's duration.
- **The Hill: Health Care Industry Groups Back ObamaCare Reforms Proposed By Democrats:** Powerful interests in the health care industry united behind a set of proposals Wednesday they argued would achieve universal insurance coverage, an apparent endorsement of similar plans offered by congressional Democrats and President Biden to build on the Affordable Care Act (ACA).
- **Bloomberg Government: ACA Architect Could Lead Value-Based Care Office:** Elizabeth Fowler, who led the drafting of the Affordable Care Act and then implemented the major health law, has emerged as the top contender to run the Health and Human Services Department's Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, according to people familiar with the matter.
- **360Dx: Clinical Laboratories Prepare For Coronavirus Variants:** While existing molecular tests appear to be capable of detecting the new UK and South Africa SARS-Cov-2 strains that have been the focus of much recent attention and concern, the appearance of these and other variants could require changes in labs' testing processes and the development of better tools for monitoring the presence of relevant variants in the patients they serve. The most immediate concern from a lab's perspective is that the mutations that characterize major SARS-CoV-2 variants may make molecular or antigen tests for detecting the virus less effective by altering the regions of RNA or protein these tests target.