

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Tuesday, February 16, 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

- 11:30am: press briefing by Jen Psaki
- 12:30pm: President Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris receive the Daily Brief
- 5:30pm: Biden departs White House for Milwaukee
- 9pm: Biden participates in a CNN town hall from Milwaukee
- 12:50am: Biden arrives at the White House

CONGRESS

- House, Senate on recess

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Steps Taken to Undo Trump-Era Medicaid Work Rules:** The Biden administration on Friday notified several states it was taking steps to withdraw moves from the Trump administration to preserve requirements that Medicaid beneficiaries work as a condition of having coverage. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services acting director Elizabeth Richter notified Arkansas, Georgia, Ohio, Nebraska, Indiana, Arizona, Wisconsin, South Carolina, and Utah.
- **KHN: The ACA Marketplace Is Open Again For Insurance Sign-Ups. Here's What You Need To Know:** For people who've been without health insurance during the pandemic, relief is in sight. In January, President Joe Biden signed an executive order to open up the federal health insurance marketplace for three months as of Monday so uninsured people can buy a plan and those who want to change their marketplace coverage can do so.
- **Bloomberg Government: House Panel Approves Medicaid Funds in Aid Measure:** The House Energy and Commerce Committee on Friday approved a measure providing states billions of dollars to expand their Medicaid programs and let them demand higher rebates from drug makers. The measure would allow states to extend Medicaid to new mothers for a year, increase the federal share of Medicaid funding for states that expand their programs, and eliminate a cap on Medicaid drug rebates starting in 2023, Alex Ruoff reports.
 - House Democrats sent that package and their other coronavirus relief measures to the Budget Committee, as they prepare to move ahead with a bill that largely matches President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion proposal, Jack Fitzpatrick reports. The House Budget Committee has yet to schedule a markup, which would mostly be a formality. The Senate Budget Committee doesn't plan to hold a markup of the bill, instead sending it straight to the floor, a Senate Democratic aide said Friday.

- **Bloomberg Government: Senate Appropriators' New Chairs Unveiled:** Senate Appropriations Chair Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) announced the 12 subcommittee chairs responsible for discretionary spending. Sen. Tammy Baldwin (Wis.) will lead the Agriculture-FDA panel. She was not the top Democrat in the 116th Congress. Sen. Patty Murray (Wash.), who served as top Democrat on the Labor-HHS-Education panel, will reprise that role as its chair.
- **Healthcare: Hospital Apps Becoming More Patient-Friendly:** As smartphones have become tightly intertwined into so many Americans' lives, hospital executives have realized that to play a central role in their patients' health, they need to meet them where they are – via their phone. Having an app to engage patients is “table stakes,” said Tom Kiesau, leader of the digital transformation unit at the Chartis Group. But while most health system app strategies historically have centered around the electronic health record's patient-specific patient portal, a growing number of systems have wanted to offer more customized apps.
- **Bloomberg Government: Medicare Addiction Coverage Gaps Scrutinized:** Access to affordable care is key to treating people with addiction, but adults over 65 may have a hard time getting Medicare to cover the treatment they need. Advocates for people with addiction claim the federal program is falling flat on covering some standard intermediary treatments recommended for substance abuse disorders and they're hoping that Congress will be open to making some legislative changes to fix an issue made worse by the opioid crisis and the coronavirus.