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**

- 9:45am: Biden receives the President’s Daily Brief
- 12:05pm: Biden makes announcement related to small businesses
- 12:30pm: press briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki
- 3pm: Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and public health officials
- 6pm: Biden delivers remarks on the lives lost to COVID-19, followed by a moment of silence

**CONGRESS**

- Senate convenes at 3pm
- Senate will vote on Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Biden’s nominee for ambassador to the United Nations
- House meets for pro forma session at 11:30am, no votes are expected
- 1pm: House Budget Committee holds a virtual markup of Democrats’ virus relief package, aiming for a floor vote on Feb. 26

**Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News**

- **Bloomberg Government: ACA Veteran Named to Lead Medicare Office**: Biden has chosen Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to run his Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, tasking the experienced health-care aide with expanding the Affordable Care Act and rolling back Trump-era changes to the Medicare and Medicaid programs. The former official at HHS who helped carry out Obamacare, will be entrusted with one of Biden’s top health policy priorities: strengthening the signature health law.

- **Bloomberg Government: Next Package Takes Shape**: The next phase of Biden’s legislative agenda is already taking shape, with an economic-recovery package that will potentially far surpass the $1.9 trillion virus-relief plan in size, complexity and overall ambition. The White House and congressional Democrats have been busy plotting strategy for the proposal, which could be unveiled next month, kicking off a legislative process that may culminate by August.
  - The centerpiece will be possibly the biggest infrastructure-spending commitment since the New Deal, including roads, bridges, and rural broadband internet. Progressives are seeking much more, including an expansion of Obamacare and a public-sector jobs program, along with tax measures including an increase in the capital-gains levy. But stuffing it with too many controversial proposals could threaten its approval or force it to be broken up—and put in peril the Democrats’ narrow majorities in 2022’s midterm elections. Still, Democrats see a narrow opening to forge Biden’s legacy: not just restoring the American economy to its
pre-pandemic state, but reversing the trend of sluggish growth in recent years with the most far-reaching measures in decades.

- **Politico: Dems Prepare For Party-Line House Vote On Biden's Pandemic Aid Bill**: The House is on track to pass President Joe Biden’s $1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package by the end of this week as Congress sprints to deliver aid to millions of Americans reeling from the pandemic and facing a jobless benefits cliff in mid-March. But House Democrats aren't expecting to get a single GOP vote for their aid package, which they're taking up with the procedural maneuver known as reconciliation in order to win Senate passage without the threat of a filibuster. The House Budget Committee will meet Monday afternoon to tee up the legislation for floor passage on Friday or Saturday, with Senate action as soon as the following week.

- **Bloomberg Government: White House Will Give Small Firms Two-Week Exclusive PPP Access**: The Biden administration will give exclusive access to the Paycheck Protection Program to the nation’s smallest businesses for two weeks as part of a broader effort to steer federal aid to the most vulnerable parts of the economy. From Feb. 24 through March 9, only businesses with fewer than 20 employees will be able to apply for relief through the program, a senior administration official said.

- **New York Post: Michigan Woman Dies From COVID-19 After Lung Transplant**: The donor was a woman from the Upper Midwest who died after suffering from a severe brain injury in a car accident. The recipient had chronic obstructive lung disease and was operated on at University Hospital in Ann Arbor. Nose and throat samples collected from the donor and the recipient had tested negative for COVID-19.

- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Deems Texas Major Disaster**: Biden approved a major disaster declaration for Texas, which will expedite federal funding for a state wracked with widespread power outages after a rare arctic blast last week. Separately, the Environmental Protection Agency approved fuel waivers for the state to prevent gasoline shortages, following blackouts this week that killed dozens. The major disaster declaration also provides a range of federal assistance programs, including funds for emergency and permanent work, FEMA says.
  - Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) visited the Houston Food Bank on Saturday in support of her fundraising efforts for Texas storm aid, saying the winter disaster had pushed many to the brink.

- **Modern Healthcare: Staffing Stress Leading To Calls For More Nurses**: Anecdotes from front-line caregivers—particularly nurses—over unsafe conditions for patients have emerged throughout the pandemic. Crystal Johnson, an emergency department nurse at Emanate Health Inter-Community Hospital in Covina, Calif., is an example. The hospital experienced a surge of COVID-19 during the holiday season and in the weeks after. When she spoke to Modern Healthcare last month, Johnson claimed a waiver from the state allowing hospitals to adopt higher nurse-staffing ratios led to subpar care for patients. “You’re prioritizing your care based on what is needed at the time,” she said. “It’s completely unsafe.”