

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, February 5, 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

- 9:15am: Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris receive the President's Daily Brief
- 9:45am: Biden, Harris meet with House Democratic leaders and House committee chairs working on the president's stimulus package
- 11am: White House Covid-19 Response Team and public health officials give press briefing
- 11:45am: Biden makes remarks on the state of the economy and his recovery proposals; Harris, Treasury Sec. Janet Yellen attend
- 1pm: Press Sec. Jen Psaki and Council of Economic Advisers member Jared Bernstein give press briefing
- 3pm: Harris, Yellen hold virtual roundtable with participants from local Black Chambers of Commerce to discuss stimulus plan
- 4:55pm: Biden departs White House en route to Wilmington
- 5:50pm: Biden arrives in Wilmington

CONGRESS

- House meets at 9am
 - Will complete consideration of a bill, H.R. 447, that would authorize about \$3.9 billion over five years to expand registered apprenticeships
 - Considers S. Con. Res. 5, a budget resolution for the 2021 fiscal year that would pave the way for Biden's pandemic-relief plan to proceed with Democrat-only support
 - Chamber is taking up the resolution after it was adopted by the Senate earlier Friday
- Senate returns Monday at 3pm

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **CIDRAP: Dialysis Patients At Nearly 4 Times The Risk For COVID Death:** Patients undergoing long-term dialysis were more than five times likelier to be infected with COVID-19 and nearly four times as likely to die than the general population, suggesting that they should be prioritized for vaccination, according to a Canadian study published today in CMAJ. In the study, researchers from the Ontario Renal Network at Western University in London, Ontario, compared disease characteristics and death rate between long-term dialysis patients with and without COVID-19 infection using linked datasets from Mar 12 to Aug 20, 2020.
- **Bloomberg Government: Organ Donation Network Draws Scrutiny:** A bipartisan Senate duo subpoenaed the United Network for Organ Sharing for documents concerning

oversight of organ transplant centers. Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) wrote they “have serious concerns” about the private nonprofit group’s oversight of organizations responsible for procuring organs, which they argued “have been severely underperforming for decades.”

- **Bloomberg Government: Bipartisan Group Wants Separate Health Package:** A bipartisan group of 56 House members is calling for an immediate vote on a \$160 billion package of funds for coronavirus vaccinations, testing, tracing and health-provider funding. The Problems Solvers Caucus was instrumental in propelling the December agreement on the \$900 billion Covid-19 relief bill. Now, the group says that health funding is needed immediately even as wider talks on stimulus checks, unemployment insurance, child tax credits and other provisions continue.
- **Bloomberg Government: Johnson & Johnson Submits FDA Application:** Johnson & Johnson asked U.S. drug regulators to clear its experimental Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use, setting up what is poised to be a fast-moving review process that could lead to millions more doses becoming available to step up a stumbling immunization effort. The drugmaker in a statement said it filed an application for an emergency-use authorization with the Food and Drug Administration. If cleared, the J&J shot would offer the U.S. a third vaccine to try to halt a disease that’s killed more than 450,000 Americans.
- **Politico: Frontrunner Emerges For Biden’s Medicare And Medicaid Chief:** Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, a longtime Democratic health policy expert, has emerged as the leading candidate to run President Joe Biden’s Medicare and Medicaid agency, according to three sources familiar with the Biden team’s discussions. The eventual head of the trillion-dollar agency will be charged with overseeing Biden’s pledge to expand Obamacare and reverse Trump-era restrictions on the health care safety net.
- **Bloomberg Government: Warner, Warnock Introduce Medicaid Expansion Bill:** Eleven Senate Democrats led by Sens. Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.) introduced a measure yesterday to encourage states to expand their Medicaid program. The bill would permit states that bolstered Medicaid after 2014 or ones that plan to “expand Medicaid in the years ahead” to receive the same full federal match as the states that expanded Medicaid earlier under the terms of the Affordable Care Act.
- **KHN: As Demand For Mental Health Care Spikes, Budget Ax Set To Strike:** When the pandemic hit, health officials in Montana’s Beaverhead County had barely begun to fill a hole left by the 2017 closure of the local public assistance office, mental health clinic, chemical dependency center and job placement office after the state’s last budget shortfall. Now, those health officials worry more cuts are coming, even as they brace for a spike in demand for substance abuse and mental health services. That would be no small challenge in a poor farming and ranching region where stigma often prevents people from admitting they need help, said Katherine Buckley-Patton, who chairs the county’s Mental Health Local Advisory Council.