

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, March 4, 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

- 2pm: President Biden, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg meet with bipartisan group of House members on infrastructure
- 5pm: Biden participates in virtual call with NASA team to congratulate members on successful Mars landing
- 12:45pm: Press Sec. Jen Psaki holds press briefing with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough

CONGRESS

- U.S. House next meets March 8
 - Chamber canceled plans for Thursday votes partly due to threat
- U.S. Senate convenes at Noon

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Senate Aid Bill Delays Drug Price Change:** Senate Democrats would postpone by one year a proposal to let states claw back money from drugmakers, according to two people briefed on forthcoming stimulus legislation. The change is one of several that largely help hospitals, drug firms, and other health-care industry groups. The Senate version of the Covid-19 aid package would end the limit on Medicaid's drug rebate program starting in 2024, a year later than the House-passed version, the people said.
- **Politico: Biden Strikes Stimulus Deal With Senate Democrats:** Senate Democrats and President Joe Biden settled a last-minute debate over Biden's \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief bill on Wednesday, choosing to keep federal unemployment benefit payments at \$400 per week but narrow the phaseout of the measure's \$1,400 stimulus checks. The breakthrough came just hours before debate was expected to kick off on the bill. But a delayed response from the Congressional Budget Office on its budgetary impacts punted the first test vote on the legislation to Thursday. The Senate is waiting for the CBO to confirm that its bill doesn't run afoul of the rules of budget reconciliation, the process that allows passage of the package with a simple majority.
- **The Washington Post: More Than 200,000 Americans Sign Up For ACA Health Plans During Special Enrollment Period:** More than 200,000 Americans signed up for Affordable Care Act health plans during the first two weeks of an extended enrollment period President Biden ordered to help more people find insurance amid the economic ripple effects caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Figures released Wednesday by federal health officials show the number of consumers who chose coverage through

HealthCare.gov from Feb. 15 to Feb. 28 – 206,236 – was nearly three times higher than during the same period last year and roughly 3½ times greater than in 2019.

- **USA Today: Convalescent Plasma Study: Treatment Doesn't Stop More Severe COVID-19:** Convalescent plasma has been used widely to treat patients with COVID-19, under the assumption that the immune cells in a recovered person's blood would help the next patient fight off the virus. The Food and Drug Administration authorized the emergency use of convalescent plasma last summer for hospitalized patients during the pandemic, though it said further research would be needed to confirm its effectiveness. A trial run by the National Institutes of Health was stopped early Tuesday, because an independent group of reviewers determined it was not providing benefit to COVID-19 patients treated and released from emergency rooms.