

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Monday, April 12, 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

- 11am: White House Covid-19 Response team holds press briefing
- Noon: Biden briefly joins the virtual CEO summit on semiconductor and supply chain resilience; National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, National Economic Council Director Brian Deese, and the Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo also attend
- 12:15pm: White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki holds press briefing
- 1:45pm: Biden meets with lawmakers to discuss infrastructure package

CONGRESS

- 3pm: Senate opener marks returns from recess; House resumes April 13

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Organ Procurement Groups Ready to Work With HHS:** Groups that connect organ donors with waiting recipients vowed to work with the Biden administration to implement a Trump-era rule meant to bolster organ donations and transplants by requiring more accountability and better performance. After lobbying against the new rule, Joe Ferreira, president of the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations, said it's "always supported improvement to our organ donation and transplantation system and endorse the direction of the new CMS rule."
- **Bloomberg Government: Drug Pricing:** Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle continue to preach the importance of reducing the cost of medicines at the pharmacy counter. Prominent Democrats in both chambers have endorsed directing the government to negotiate with drugmakers over the price of prescription drugs and redesigning Medicare to be more generous. Four bills introduced this year focus primarily on amending the Social Security Act to let the government directly negotiate drug prices in Medicare: H.R. 2071, H.R. 2139, S. 833, and S. 908.
- **KHN: Biden Seeks \$400 Billion To Buttress Long-Term Care. A Look At What's At Stake:** There's widespread agreement that it's important to help older adults and people with disabilities remain independent as long as possible. But are we prepared to do what's necessary, as a nation, to make this possible? That's the challenge President Joe Biden has put forward with his bold proposal to spend \$400 billion over eight years on home and community-based services, a major part of his \$2 trillion infrastructure plan.
- **Bloomberg Government: Public Option:** Biden's election has given new life to supporters of a government-run health insurance plan, known as a public option. Supporters say a public option would allow the government to lower the cost of health-care services by

influencing what private insurers pay doctors and hospitals. S. 386 and H.R. 1227 would create a public health insurance option that piggybacks off Medicare for individuals and small businesses.

- **Bloomberg Government: Generics:** While drug-price negotiation is focused on pricey, brand-name drugs, some lawmakers have turned their attention to easing entry for generic drugs – low-cost copies of popular medicines. H.R. 153 would ban brand-name drug companies from paying generic manufacturers to delay bringing their products to market. It would also block biologic drugmakers from paying generic counterparts to delay the launch of biosimilars.
- **Bloomberg Government: OSHA Rule Protecting Workers From Covid Expected Soon:** The Biden administration is poised to reinstate masking and other social distancing rules in the workplace. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration is preparing to issue new short-term regulations to protect workers from catching Covid-19 on the job, according to lawyers tracking the agency’s efforts. They could be made public as early as this week, these lawyers say, and take effect soon after that.
- **Stat: Google Is Exploring A Health Record Tool For Patients:** After 13 years, Google is coming back for patient health records. The tech giant has launched an early user feedback program aimed at exploring how patients might want to see, organize, and share their own medical record data. The work could inform the creation of a consumer-facing medical records tool along the lines of Apple’s Health Records app. It also follows an early attempt by Google – later panned by medical experts – at creating a new version of the electronic medical record in 2008.
- **Bloomberg Government: Congress Pushes Back on Infrastructure Plan:** Biden wants to boost the American economy and compete with China with a \$2.25 trillion infrastructure and public works package. The package calls for investing in a wide variety of projects, from traditional spending on roads and bridges, to funds aimed at improving care for the elderly and people with disabilities.
 - But GOP opposition could drive Democrats to turn to budget reconciliation once again to sidestep a potential filibuster, which would require a supermajority of 60 senators to break. The plan includes about \$620 billion for transportation and resilience; \$580 billion for workforce development, research, and manufacturing; \$400 billion for elder and disability care; and \$650 billion for initiatives aimed at better quality of life at home, including lead-free pipes, broadband, and housing.
 - Biden will meet with both Republican and Democratic members of Congress today to discuss his plan to build U.S. infrastructure, an early test of political support for the proposal. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Friday that lawmakers from both the House and Senate have been invited to the meeting.
- **Bloomberg Government: Explaining Biden’s Supreme Court Commission:** Biden created a 36-member bipartisan commission to study potential changes to the U.S. Supreme Court, fulfilling a promise he made on the campaign trail. The Presidential Commission on the Supreme Court of the United States will look at “the contemporary public debate for and against Supreme Court reform,” the White House said in a statement on Friday.