

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Tuesday, April 13, 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: Biden pays his respects for U.S. Capitol Police Officer William Evans
- 2pm: Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris meet with members of the Congressional Black Caucus in the Oval Office
- 12:30pm: White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki holds media briefing

CONGRESS

- Senate convenes at Noon; chamber is set to vote at 2:15pm on the nomination of Polly Trottenberg to be deputy secretary of transportation
- House meets at 7pm for legislative business

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Medicare Sequestration:** The House plans to delay scheduled cuts to Medicare for another nine months with a Senate amendment to H.R. 1868 it is slated to vote on today under suspension of the rules, which bars amendments and limits debate. The bill would suspend, through Dec. 31, Medicare sequestration required under the 2011 Budget Control Act that reduces payments by a maximum of 2% annually.
 - The Senate amendment doesn't include provisions from the House-passed version of the bill that would have averted another 4% Medicare cut under PAYGO rules automatically triggered by President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act. Senators amended and passed the bill 90-2 on March 25.
- **Bloomberg Government: U.S. Opposes Top Court Review of ACA Case:** Health insurers who increased their premiums to make up for losses they incurred when the federal government stopped reimbursing them for decreasing insured individuals' out-of-pocket costs may not recover the entire amount of the unpaid payments, the U.S. told the Supreme Court. This is the latest chapter in a dispute between the federal government and insurers who claimed they didn't get everything they were promised when they agreed to go along with Obamacare's plan to make coverage cheaper.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Biden Infrastructure Plan Would Fund Shift Toward Home Healthcare For Seniors:** President Biden's \$2.3 trillion infrastructure plan would devote \$400 billion to providing seniors more medical care at home, with the aim of shifting treatment away from institutions and hospitals as the U.S. faces a looming surge in its aging population. Democrats say the measure is needed because the healthcare system is unprepared for the unprecedented growth in the senior population and the bill would boost incomes for the many women and people in minority groups who provide the services.

- **KHN: Covid Spawns 'Completely New Category' Of Organ Transplants:** In a year when covid-19 shattered the pleas of so many who prayed for miracles, a Georgia man with two new lungs is among the fortunate. Mark Buchanan, of Roopville, received a double-lung transplant in October, nearly three months after covid left him hospitalized and sedated, first on a ventilator and then on the last-resort treatment known as ECMO. "They said that it had ruined my lungs," said Buchanan, 53, who was a burly power company lineman when he fell ill. "The vent and the covid ruined 'em completely."
- **Axios: Democrats, Led By Biden, Are Aiming Big On Health Care:** Democrats are exploring adding a huge array of health policies to upcoming spending legislation, ranging from further enhancing Affordable Care Act subsidies to allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices. The next few months may give Democrats the opportunity to walk the walk after campaigning extensively on health care for years, and to plug some of the glaring holes in the system that were exposed by the pandemic.
- **Stat: Amazon Doubles Down On Its Growing Presence In Diagnostics:** Vin Gupta's hiring in January 2020 could not have come at a better time for Amazon. The extent of the coronavirus crisis wasn't yet clear, but the company's cloud division had just nabbed a practicing pulmonologist and public health expert to guide its strategy during the worst respiratory pandemic in global history. The result is a growing enterprise within the company to help customers build diagnostic tools that may long outlast the pandemic, and help Amazon further expand its footprint in the \$3.5 trillion health care industry.