

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, April 15, 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 Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris meet with the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus Executive Committee
- 12:30pm: White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki holds media briefing

CONGRESS

- Senate convenes at 10am
- House meets at 12pm
- 10:45am: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi holds press conference

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Nominations:** The Senate Finance Committee holds a hearing on the nominations of Andrea Joan Palm to be a deputy secretary, and Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to be administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service, both of the Health and Human Services Department.
- **Bloomberg Government: Fiscal 2022 Appropriations:** The House Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee will review the Health and Human Services Department. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra will testify.
- **Stat: Digital Health Startups Want To Bring Glucose Monitors To The Masses:** For the 1.6 million people in America living with type 1 diabetes, a continuous glucose monitor can be a lifesaver. Since the first CGM was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1999, the diabetes community has advocated for lower prices and better insurance coverage for the quarter-sized devices, which regularly sample a proxy for blood glucose levels and can sound an alarm when they swing too high or too low. But the cost-cutting has had an unexpected side effect: Today, glucose monitors are so cheap they've spawned a new crop of digital health startups selling the devices to consumers, many of whom don't have diabetes.
- **KHN: The FDA Seeks A New Way To Review Old Drugs Without Causing Prices To Soar:** Chuck Peterson of Omaha, Nebraska, recently experienced a swollen, painful knuckle caused by arthritis. He got a prescription for colchicine. Doctors have used the drug for treating gout and other rheumatic conditions for well over two centuries. When Peterson went to the pharmacy, he was shocked to discover that a two-month supply of 120 pills, distributed by Par Pharmaceutical, would cost him \$225 out-of-pocket on his Medicare Part D drug plan. Taking it for an additional three months, as his rheumatologist wanted him to do, would cost him nearly \$600 under his drug plan.

- **Axios: CMS Says Hospitals Cannot Use Code To Hide Treatment Costs From Google:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has told hospitals they can't hide their prices from web searches, the Wall Street Journal reports. New federal rules require hospitals to post their pricing information online, but some large systems were using code that prevented that information from appearing in search results.
- **Stat: FDA Urged To Move Faster To List Medicines Withdrawn Over Safety Concerns:** Arguing patient safety is at risk, an advocacy group is urging the Food and Drug Administration to create a new policy for updating an official list of medicines that are withdrawn after being deemed unsafe or ineffective. In a petition filed with the agency, Public Citizen noted that the FDA has, in most cases over the past two decades, taken “at least several years” to update this list. Meanwhile, patients could be potentially harmed by compounded formulations that physicians and pharmacists are legally permitted to make in the interim.
- **Modern Healthcare: Some Healthcare Associations Moving Full Steam Ahead With Conferences Starting In Summer:** Some healthcare associations – eager to ramp up one of their most important revenue streams – are bringing back in-person events this summer. Trade groups that support healthcare providers pivoted to virtual events when the pandemic struck, but quickly learned they make far less money that way. Now that COVID vaccines are gaining momentum, some groups are betting their members will want to get together in person – with masks and plenty of space – as early as June.