American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Monday, April 19, 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

- 10:30am: Briefing from the White House COVID-19 Response Team
- 12:15pm: Briefing from Press Secretary Jen Psaki
- 1:15pm: President Biden meets with a bipartisan group of lawmakers at the White House as outreach continues on his $2.25 trillion infrastructure-and-tax plan.
  - The meeting comes as talks on a potential bipartisan agreement on a scaled-down version of Biden’s so-called American Jobs Plan have intensified.

CONGRESS:

- The House plans to consider 21 measures today under expedited procedure that indicates broad, bipartisan support.
- The Senate will resume consideration of legislation combating hate crimes against Asian-Americans.
  - The chamber voted 92-6 on Wednesday to move forward on the legislation, which lawmakers of both parties say they want to expand and strengthen.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Medicare Coalition Supports Telehealth Bill:** Better Medicare Alliance, an advocacy group supporting Medicare Advantage, sent a letter signed by 33 organizations including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce announcing support for a bipartisan measure that would “protect continuity of care for Medicare Advantage beneficiaries during the COVID-19 pandemic by allowing the use of audio-only telehealth for risk adjustment purposes,” the group write. The bill (S. 150, H.R. 2166) was unveiled by Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) and Tim Scott (R-S.C.) and Reps. Terri Sewell (D-Ala.) and Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.).

- **CBS News: Half Of U.S. Adults Have Received At Least One COVID Vaccination, CDC Says:** Almost 130 million people 18 or older, or about 50.4% of the total U.S. adult population, have received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As of Sunday night, the CDC said a total of 84 million people in the U.S. are fully vaccinated. So far, more than 3 million around the world have died due to COVID-19, per a tally by Johns Hopkins University. There's no end in sight, however, for America's fight against the coronavirus. Cases and hospitalizations are on the rise again as a key vaccine is still on hold. In Los Angeles, residents lined up at a super site for a vaccine.

- **Bloomberg Government: Biden to Hold Bipartisan Lawmaker Meeting:** Biden will meet today at 1:15 p.m. with a bipartisan group of lawmakers as outreach continues on his $2.25 trillion infrastructure-and-tax plan. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki announced the
plans at a briefing Friday, without specifying which members of Congress will be in the meeting. The group will discuss “historic investments in the American jobs plan including in highways, drinking water systems, broadband and the care economy,” she said.

- **Modern Healthcare: Biden Admin Throws Out Texas Medicaid Waiver**: The Biden administration on Friday unwound a 10-year extension of Texas’ Medicaid waiver, arguing that the Trump administration should not have approved its more than $100 billion request without going through the usual notice and comment period. Texas asked CMS to fast-track an extension of its Medicaid waiver, which mostly covers uncompensated care costs, in November. At the time, the state said it needed an exemption from the usual public comment period to ensure financial stability for providers and the state's Medicaid program during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

- **The New York Times: The Covid-19 Plasma Boom Is Over. What Did We Learn From It?**: Scott Cohen was on a ventilator struggling for his life with Covid-19 last April when his brothers pleaded with Plainview Hospital on Long Island to infuse him with the blood plasma of a recovered patient. The experimental treatment was hard to get but was gaining attention at a time when doctors had little else. After an online petition drew 18,000 signatures, the hospital gave Mr. Cohen, a retired Nassau County medic, an infusion of the pale yellow stuff that some called “liquid gold.”

- **Bloomberg Government: Medical Device Data Excluded From FDA Review**: Software that stores, transfers, or displays clinical lab tests or other medical data is excluded from FDA regulations governing medical devices, according to a final rule released Friday. The Food and Drug Administration’s rule amended descriptions in eight instances to conform to a provision in the law that says medical software that encourages a healthy lifestyle and is unrelated to the diagnosis or treatment of a disease or condition isn’t required to undergo FDA review. The law also says health facilities’ administrative support systems that track billing and claims information or appointment schedules aren’t considered medical devices.