

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Tuesday, April 20, 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

- President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris plan to meet this morning at the White House with leaders of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.
- This afternoon, Biden will participate in a virtual tour of the Proterra electric battery facility in South Carolina.

CONGRESS:

- House lawmakers are scheduled to vote on 17 measures under expedited procedures.
- The Senate plans a vote on the nomination of SEC Chairman Gary Gensler for a full six-year term at the agency.
- The Senate Appropriations Committee plans a hearing on Biden’s infrastructure plan with Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, EPA Administrator Michael Reagan, and HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Federal and State Health Waiver Talks Less Indulgent:** The Biden administration’s rapid actions to undo state work requirements for Medicaid breaks from the generally indulgent past approach to pilot health programs, signaling upcoming transformations in the waiver system. The Health and Human Services Department’s recent notices to several states that HHS is rolling back Trump-era must-work rules for adults on Medicaid is straight out of the administrative-law playbook, involving public notice and opportunities for review hearings.
- **KHN: Humana Health Plan Overcharged Medicare By Nearly \$200 Million, Federal Audit Finds:** A Humana Inc. health plan for seniors in Florida improperly collected nearly \$200 million in 2015 by overstating how sick some patients were, according to a new federal audit, which seeks to claw back the money. The Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General’s recommendation to repay, if finalized, would be “by far the largest” audit penalty ever imposed on a Medicare Advantage company, said Christopher Bresette, an HHS assistant regional inspector general.
- **Bloomberg Government: SALT Cap Revolt Snarls Biden Spending Plan:** President Donald Trump’s 2017 tax law disproportionately targeted Democrats in high-tax states by eliminating a popular federal deduction. Now Trump’s legislative triumph has put Biden in a bind. Newly released Internal Revenue Service data show the politically lopsided impact of the \$10,000 cap on deducting state and local taxes, or SALT -- and why

Democrats from the hardest-hit SALT states may be willing to cost Biden the crucial victory of passing his \$2.25 trillion infrastructure and social services plan if he continues to insist on keeping Trump's cap in place.

- In some New York congressional districts, the average deduction lost because of the SALT cap can be more than \$100,000 a year, according to the IRS data. And of the 40 congressional districts with the largest SALT deductions disallowed under the Trump tax law, 39 are represented by Democrats. "I'm not voting for any change in the tax code whatsoever unless there's the restoration of the SALT tax deduction. I'm laying that chit on the table," said Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-N.Y.), who's emerged as a leader of a bipartisan SALT Caucus.

- **The Washington Post: The Race To Untangle The Secrets Of Rare, Severe Blood Clots After Johnson & Johnson Vaccination:** When an otherwise healthy 48-year-old Nebraska woman arrived at an emergency room after three days of abdominal pain and malaise, doctors discovered a life-threatening puzzle. Her platelets, the colorless blood cells that clump to form clots, had plummeted. But a CT scan of her abdomen and pelvis revealed extensive blood clots. Her medical team raced to untangle the seemingly paradoxical combination of symptoms. Even as they treated the patient with a common blood thinner, more clots appeared — in her brain and in the blood vessels around her liver and spleen.
- **Modern Healthcare: HHS Allocates \$145 Million To Health Center Look-Alikes To Fight COVID-19:** Community-based healthcare providers will get \$145 million from HHS to support their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency said Monday. The funding is for so-called "health center look-alikes," providers that deliver primary care services to underserved communities and vulnerable populations but don't get health center grants from HHS. They can use it to slow the spread of the virus, strengthen vaccine efforts and improve healthcare services and related infrastructure. The new spending is part of the \$7.6 billion that Congress gave HHS to help community health centers fight COVID-19 under the American Rescue Plan.