

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, April 23, 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

- Climate Summit sessions continue today, and Biden will deliver remarks at 9:15 a.m.
- The president today will also participate at 2:45 p.m. in a virtual Defense Department senior leaders conference.

### CONGRESS:

- House and Senate return Monday, April 26.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Health Policy Picks Move to Confirmation Votes:** Biden's picks to lead his Medicare agency and serve as deputy health secretary advanced out the Senate Finance Committee yesterday over GOP objections. The panel approved Andrea Palm, nominated as the Health and Human Services deputy secretary, on a 20-8 vote. Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, picked to head the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, split the committee by party, 14-14.
- **Modern Healthcare: House Democrats Back Medicare Drug Price Negotiations In Infrastructure Talks:** House Democrats introduced a bill Thursday that would allow the federal government to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for lower prices on drugs covered by Medicare, a long-held goal for the party that has its best chance in passing Congress in years. Still, substantial drug pricing reform appears to be an uphill battle with Democrats' narrow majorities in the House and Senate, mixed signals on whether President Joe Biden is ready to back such legislation this year and lobbying by the powerful pharmaceutical industry.
- **Bloomberg Government: U.S. Looks for Telehealth Value Added in Price of Care:** Telemedicine needs to show where it can add value – cutting health coverage costs or improving access to care – as policymakers consider permanently loosening regulatory restrictions, a White House adviser said yesterday. The telehealth sector and employer groups are lobbying to permanently lift restrictions, such as geographic limits over where telehealth visits may be used or state licensing requirements that bar telehealth providers from serving patients across state lines.
- **Modern Healthcare: Most Broker Sites Advertise Less Than 50% Of Medicare Plans:** Just 43% of available Medicare Advantage products, and 65% of Part D plans, were showcased on broker plan selection tools, according to a report released by The Commonwealth Fund on Thursday. Additionally, when researchers searched online for health coverage options, they found that web results primarily showcased information directly from health plans – not from neutral government, or third-party, sources. After looking through multiple

large brokerage sites, researchers found one page that included information about Medigap plans, and only 18% of those available benefits were showcased.

- **Modern Healthcare: Premier Asks CMS To Give ACOs More Time To Prep For New MSSP Quality Reporting Requirements:** Accountable care organizations need more time to adjust to new quality reporting requirements for the Medicare Shared Savings Program set to take effect in 2022, group purchasing and consulting organization Premier told CMS in a letter last week. The organization, which serves about 4,100 hospitals and health systems, said the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for providers to devote the time and resources necessary to make the required changes.
- **CBS News: The CDC And FDA Are Leaning Toward Resuming Use Of The Johnson & Johnson Vaccine, Sources Say:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration are leaning toward resuming use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine with a warning about blood clots, sources told CBS News. A decision is expected Friday, more than a week after the vaccine's distribution was paused following reports of rare but dangerous blood clots in eight people under the age of 50. "I think too many people may be scared off by taking the vaccine. They shouldn't be, but perception is everything when it comes to vaccines," said Dr. Peter Hotez, who works at the Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development.