

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, April 8, 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

- 11:45am: President Biden speaks about gun violence prevention; Vice President Kamala Harris, Attorney General Merrick Garland attend Biden's remarks in Rose Garden
- 1pm: Biden, Harris have lunch
- 4:15pm: Biden, Harris receive Covid-19 briefing
- 12:30pm: White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki holds press briefing with Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm

CONGRESS

- Senate, House adjourned until the week of April 12
- 2pm: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi holds a press conference

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Biden to Release 2022 U.S. Budget Outline Friday:** Biden will release his preliminary spending requests for 2022 tomorrow, the White House said, the first step before Congress negotiates the government's budget for the fiscal year starting in October.
 - Biden's spending request will also only deal with about a quarter of the annual federal budget -- discretionary spending set annually by Congress -- leaving out entitlements like Medicare, Medicaid, Obamacare and Social Security. And the document won't include the infrastructure and jobs plan the president unveiled last week in Pittsburgh.
 - His first full budget proposal, including tax, entitlements and debt figures, is expected later in the year.
- **Bloomberg Government: EEOC Pressed for Vaccine Incentive Guidance:** A pair of Republican lawmakers asked the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to offer insight on the murky legal area of vaccine incentives, perks offered by employers to encourage workers to receive a Covid-19 shot. Employers seeking to protect employees by increasing vaccinations through incentive programs need assurances it "does not violate important labor laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act," they said.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden's ACA Signup Period Draws a Half-Million Enrollees:** More than a half-million people have signed up for Obamacare coverage since the Biden administration reopened the federal marketplace in February, the Department of Health and Human Services said. The number of enrollees from Feb. 15 through March 31 marks

a “substantial” increase from 2020 and 2019, when 209,000 and 171,000 people signed up, an HHS fact sheet says.

- **Bloomberg Government: Employers Pressed to Ensure Hospitals Disclose Rates:** Companies that cover employees’ health coverage face greater responsibility for monitoring pricing now that hospitals in their networks must comply with a new rule requiring that negotiated rates be disclosed. The rule, which took effect Jan. 1, requires hospitals to post the rates they’ve negotiated with insurers on their websites. The rule may thus enable employers to get payment information that they could use to push their insurers to negotiate better rates with hospitals, helping ensure that employers are paying hospitals the best rates.
- **Bloomberg Government: States Wanting Stimulus Aid Can Cut Taxes to Align With IRS Code:** States that pass tax cuts to conform with recent federal tax changes won’t run afoul of a rule in Biden’s economic rescue bill that says states can’t use federal stimulus funding to pay for cuts, the U.S. Treasury Department says. “Regardless of the particular method of conformity and the effect on net tax revenue, Treasury views such changes as permissible under the offset provision,” according to a department statement released yesterday.
- **Stateline: Biden Revokes Medicaid Work Requirements In 2 More States:** The Biden administration has rescinded permissions for Michigan and Wisconsin to require Medicaid beneficiaries to either work or attend school or job training in order to enroll in the public health program for lower-income Americans. The administration’s actions follow rescissions of similar requirements in Arkansas and New Hampshire.
- **Modern Healthcare: CMS Wants To Boost Payments Over 2% For Inpatient Rehabilitation, Psychiatric:** CMS wants to boost Medicare payments for inpatient rehabilitation facilities by 2.2% and inpatient psychiatric facilities by 2.3% next year, the agency said Wednesday. According to CMS, the changes would increase federal spending on inpatient rehab by \$160 million compared to 2021. Likewise, federal spending on inpatient psychiatric facilities would go up by about \$90 million. Regulators plan to require inpatient rehabilitation and psychiatric facilities to report COVID-19 vaccine coverage among their healthcare personnel.