

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, May 14, 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 holds a meeting on his immigration plan this afternoon. The president is scheduled to meet at 3 p.m. at the White House with six immigrants, known as Dreamers, who arrived illegally in the country as children and stayed through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The individuals now work in health care, education, and agriculture, and will discuss their experiences with Biden, according to the White House schedule.

CONGRESS:

- The House is scheduled to vote today on a bill to require certain employer-provided accommodations for pregnant employees.
- The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Cyber, Innovative Technologies, and Information Systems scheduled a hearing on cyberspace operations and building cyber capabilities across the Defense Department.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Officials Set Rules for Expanding Home-Based Care:** States can get a boost to their federal Medicaid payments covering at-home nursing services to reduce their waiting lists for home and community-based service under guidance released yesterday. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services laid out how states can get a 10% increase in the federal portion of their Medicaid payments to increase access to home- and community-based services for Medicaid beneficiaries.
- **Modern Healthcare: Bill Would Revamp Medicare Advantage Prior Authorization:** Congress is eying changes to Medicare Advantage that would crack down on prior authorization tactics insurers use to rein in healthcare costs but can affect how providers care for patients. Rep. Susan DelBene (D-Wash.), Mike Kelly (R-Pa.), Ami Bera (D-Calif.) and Larry Bucshon (R-Ind.) reintroduced a bill Thursday that aims to quicken the prior authorization process and require more transparency about how often plans deny providers' requests. Healthcare lobbyists believe the proposal could see movement this year.
- **Bloomberg Government: Republicans See Possible Infrastructure Deal After Talks:** Republican senators say they're encouraged about the prospects for agreement with the White House on its \$2.25 trillion infrastructure proposal after an Oval Office meeting with President Joe Biden to negotiate over significant areas of disagreement. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.), one of several senators who attended the talks, called the discussion "productive" and said "we're very encouraged."

- While there's broad GOP opposition to the scope of Biden's plan and the tax increases he's proposed to finance it, the Republicans said they also see a possible middle ground. "We're getting somewhere," said Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) after the meeting. Biden himself expressed hope. "We had a very, very good meeting," he told reporters in the Rose Garden.
- **The Washington Post: Biden Announces \$7.4 Billion To Hire More Public Health Workers Amid Pandemic:** The White House announced Thursday that it is investing \$7.4 billion to hire more public health workers to deal with the coronavirus pandemic and future health crises. The money will come from the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package, which Congress passed in March. The funds could give a much-needed boost to America's crumbling public health infrastructure. After decades of chronic underfunding, U.S. public health departments last year showed how ill-equipped they are to carry out basic functions, let alone serve as the last line of defense against the most acute threat to the nation's health in generations.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Fully Vaccinated People Can Stop Wearing Face Masks And End Physical Distancing In Most Settings, CDC Says:** Fully vaccinated people don't need to wear a mask or physically distance during outdoor or indoor activities, large or small, federal health officials said, the broadest easing of pandemic recommendations so far. The fully vaccinated should continue to wear a mask while traveling by plane, bus or train, and the guidance doesn't apply to certain places such as hospitals, nursing homes and prisons, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday.