

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, May 17, 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 will speak at 1 p.m. from the White House on the U.S. Covid-19 response and vaccination program.

### CONGRESS:

- The House is scheduled to consider 17 measures under expedited procedures.
- The Senate convenes to resume consideration of S. 1260, the Endless Frontier Act.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Health Workforce Shortage:** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Primary Health and Retirement Security Subcommittee meets for a hearing Thursday on health care workforce shortages.
- **Bloomberg Government: Drug Prices:** The House Oversight and Reform Committee scheduled a hearing tomorrow on drug prices and will hear testimony from AbbVie CEO Richard Gonzalez.
- **Bloomberg Government: CDC Budget:** The Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee holds a hearing Wednesday on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's fiscal 2022 budget. Walensky will testify.
- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Delays Rule on Medicare Payments for Devices:** Medical device companies will see delays before getting paid for new devices after the HHS again postponed Friday a rule that promised cash for companies as soon as their new products were approved. The Biden administration in March had postponed the effective date of the rule as part of its overarching regulatory strategy to review policies released toward the end of Donald Trump's presidency for "fact, law, or policy" problems.
- **Bloomberg Government: Lawmaker Dash for Pet Projects:** About three-quarters of House members are seeking a total of almost \$14.9 billion for surface transportation ranging from electric bus grants to road expansion as Congress opens the door for earmarking money for pet projects after more than 15 years. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is reviewing more than 2,300 projects to ensure that all requests comply with the rules, Chair Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) said.
  - Congressional leaders expect to get an infrastructure and surface transportation bill on the House floor before July 4. The committee has said each House member

requesting projects would be expected to get about the same amount, between \$15 million and \$20 million, to earmark in the highway bill. Many members submitted more than that amount, with even individual projects well exceeding that cap.

- **New York Post: Largest US Nurses' Union Rips CDC's New Mask Guidelines:** The country's largest nurses' union is blasting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention over its latest recommended easing of mask restrictions - claiming the move "threatens the lives of patients, nurses and other front-line workers." "Now is not the time to relax protective measures, and we are outraged that the CDC has done just that while we are still in the midst of the deadliest pandemic in a century," said registered nurse Bonnie Castillo, president of National Nurses United, which says it represents more than 170,000 members.
- **Politico: Biden Admin Reroutes Billions In Emergency Stockpile, Covid Funds To Border Crunch:** The Department of Health and Human Services has diverted more than \$2 billion meant for other health initiatives toward covering the cost of caring for unaccompanied immigrant children, as the Biden administration grapples with a record influx of migrants on the southern border. The redirected funds include \$850 million that Congress originally allocated to rebuild the nation's Strategic National Stockpile, the emergency medical reserve strained by the Covid-19 response. Another \$850 million is being taken from a pot intended to help expand coronavirus testing, according to three people with knowledge of the matter.
- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Revokes Immigrant, Health Care Burden Ban:** Biden Friday overturned a Trump proclamation suspending entry of immigrants seen as a financial burden to U.S. health-care system. In a statement, Biden said that his administration's goal of expanding affordable health care access doesn't require "barring the entry of non-citizens who seek to immigrate lawfully to this country."