

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, May 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 will deliver remarks and sign legislation at the White House at 2 p.m. that aims to combat hate crimes against Asian Americans after a wave of attacks following the spread of Covid-19. The House passed the measure on Tuesday, following Senate passage in April.

### CONGRESS:

- The House will vote today on a bill to provide additional funding for security at the U.S. Capitol in response to the Jan. 6 attack.
- Senators plan to vote on amendments to a bill to strengthen technology supply chains boost competition with China.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Senators Take Scalpel to Medicare Telehealth Curbs:** Key senators are backing extensions of some policies that expanded access to telehealth services over the past year, as questions around costs and quality hamper a broader loosening of restrictions to remote care. Finance Chairman Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) said yesterday that Medicare beneficiaries ought to be able to access mental health services via telehealth. The panel is reviewing which enacted policies during the pandemic should be made permanent, Wyden said.
- **Bloomberg Government: H.R. 3 Savings Estimated at \$195 Billion for Employers:** Legislation empowering the federal government to negotiate drug prices would save \$195 billion for employers and \$98 billion for workers by 2030, according to a new study released today. Congress is considering legislation (H.R. 3) that would allow Medicare to directly negotiate prices with drug manufacturers for some drugs and make those same negotiated prices available to those covered by private insurance. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated the savings to the U.S. government would be \$456 billion over the same period.
- **Bloomberg Government: Health Workforce Shortage:** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Primary Health and Retirement Security Subcommittee meets for a hearing on health care workforce shortages.
- **Bloomberg Government: Senators Push for Medical Stockpile Revamp:** Pressure to reform and rebuild the nation's stockpile of emergency medical supplies is mounting after shortages early in the pandemic. Sens. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) and Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) will try this week to attach a measure to overhaul the Strategic National Stockpile to a

broad package of China competition legislation on the Senate floor, congressional aides for the two senators said.

- **Stat: J&J's CAR-T Drug Benefits Myeloma Patients With Less Advanced Disease:** When doctors prescribe a personalized cell therapy today, the patient they're trying to help has blood cancer so advanced other medicines no longer work. In the future, these so-called CAR-T treatments might be used earlier, for greater benefit, when cancer patients aren't so desperately sick. Toward that goal, a CAR-T therapy called cilta-cel from Johnson & Johnson was more effective and better tolerated when used to treat patients with less advanced multiple myeloma, according to preliminary study results released Wednesday.
- **Bloomberg Government: Drug Bill Savings Estimated at \$195 Billion for Employers:** Legislation empowering the federal government to negotiate drug prices would save \$195 billion for employers and \$98 billion for workers by 2030, according to a new study released today. Democrats are pushing legislation that would allow Medicare to directly negotiate prices with drug manufacturers for some drugs and make those same negotiated prices available to those covered by private insurance.
- **AP: Medicare For 60-Year-Olds Not Guaranteed To Be A Better Deal:** President Joe Biden and progressive Democrats have proposed to lower Medicare's eligibility age to 60, to help older adults get affordable coverage. But a new study finds that Medicare can be more expensive than other options, particularly for many people of modest means. There are two reasons: Traditional Medicare has gaps in coverage that most people fill by purchasing supplemental plans, which means they pay added premiums. And premiums for the Obama-era Affordable Care Act have come way down recently due to Biden's COVID relief bill. That's made the ACA more attractive for older adults who haven't reached Medicare's eligibility age of 65.