

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, May 21, 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

- South Korean President Moon Jae-in is set to make a last-ditch attempt to bring the U.S. and North Korea together under his watch when he meets President Biden at the White House today, trying to revive dormant nuclear talks in his final year in office.
- Biden welcomes Moon to the White House at 12:35 p.m. Bilateral meetings begin at 2:15 p.m. The two leaders will hold a press conference at 5 p.m.

### CONGRESS:

- The House holds a pro forma session.
- The Senate is out.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Biden CMS Pick to Get Monday Vote:** President Joe Biden's pick to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services could garner confirmation next week, after Senate leaders yesterday scheduled the initial vote on Chiquita Brooks-LaSure's nomination for next Monday. The chamber will have to vote twice on her nomination to confirm her to the post.
  - Brooks-LaSure's nomination for CMS has been widely opposed by Republicans over the Biden administration's decision to rescind a 10-year extension for Texas's Medicaid waiver. And Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) said yesterday that he's made little headway in negotiations with Health and Human Services Department officials, and he'll continue opposing her nomination. Brooks-LaSure appears to have enough support for the Senate to confirm her to the job. Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) joined Democrats earlier this month in supporting her nomination.
- **ABC News: Pandemic Has Made Shortage Of Health Care Workers Even Worse, Say Experts:** The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the ongoing shortage of health workers, leaving many health care facilities short-staffed even as the number of nationwide coronavirus cases plummets, experts say. "Nurse shortages are a long-standing issue, but because of COVID, it is anticipated to grow even more by next year," Dr. Ernest Grant, president of the American Nurses Association, told ABC News. "Nurses and other health workers are overworked and they are exhausted from the pandemic."
- **Bloomberg Government: Medicare Payments Case Challenges Agency Deference:** A fight over \$600 million in cuts to Medicare reimbursements for hospitals could limit the use of a decades-old principle directing courts to defer to a U.S. agency's interpretation when laws are unclear. The American Hospital Association and various hospitals have asked the Supreme Court to hear a case questioning if that principle, the Chevron

deference, should apply when the law being interpreted precludes a court's ability to decide on an agency action's lawfulness.

- **Roll Call: Sanders Says US Physician Shortage Is A 'Solvable Problem':** Senators on both sides of the aisle agreed at a hearing Thursday that Congress should work to address the nation's physician shortages, especially in primary health care, including through changes to training programs. At a Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Primary Health and Retirement Security Subcommittee hearing, Chair Bernie Sanders said the federal government could help boost the number of practicing physicians in the United States. The government spends about \$16 billion every year to fund thousands of medical residency programs.
- **Axios: Prescription Drug Price Fight Gets A Funding Infusion:** Millions of dollars are being poured into the fight over prescription drug costs – and not just from pharmaceutical companies and their allies. Consumer groups are making clear that they're not letting up on the issue, either. Lowering prescription drug costs has been a top Democratic priority for years and is hugely popular among the public, a fact that both supporters and opponents of reform aren't taking lightly.