

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, May 24, 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 receive a briefing at 1:30 p.m. on the Atlantic's hurricane outlook and preparedness efforts at the Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters in Washington. The Atlantic Ocean over the weekend produced its first named storm for 2021, making this the seventh straight year that tropical systems have emerged before the official June 1 start of hurricane season.

CONGRESS:

- Senators will vote at 5:30 p.m. on the motion to invoke cloture, or limit debate, on the nomination of Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to be administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- The House has no scheduled floor votes this week.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Stat: Health Care Providers Hope To Cash In Through Congress' Earmark Process:** Earmarks are back, and so is the health care industry's insatiable appetite to get a piece of them. A decade ago, Republicans banned the congressional funding process that allowed lawmakers to request earmarks, or money for pet projects in their home districts. But with Democrats in charge of both chambers of Congress, the requests are being permitted again, with some caveats.
- **Bloomberg Government: Disabled Americans See Opening for Fixes:** More than 30 years after the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, at least 18% of transit stations aren't ADA-accessible, according to the most recent data from the Federal Transit Administration. Now, Biden's push to advance equity through infrastructure offers an opening to make rail and transit more accessible, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) and disability advocates say.
- **Bloomberg Government: 'BioBond' Bill Seeks to Relaunch Medical Research:** Biomedical companies and universities could jump-start clinical trials disrupted by the coronavirus under a bipartisan House proposal to establish a new federally supported loan program. Reps. Bobby Rush (D-Ill.) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.) introduced the bill on Friday that aims to bolster "innovative biomedical research into therapies to address unmet medical needs," a copy of the bill shows.

- **Axios: What's At Stake For Employers In Congress's Drug Pricing Fight:** Employers and their workers have hundreds of billions of dollars at stake in the fight over House Democrats' drug pricing bill, according to a new West Health Policy Center analysis. If anyone has the political clout to take on the drug industry, it's employers. The House bill could reduce employer health spending by \$195 billion between 2023 and 2029, West Health estimates, noting that this is a conservative scenario.
- **Stat: Wealthy Nations, Drug Makers Offer Moves To Bridge Covid Vaccine Divide:** The leaders of the world's wealthiest nations and several drug makers took steps to widen equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines, such as issuing voluntary licenses to expand manufacturing, increasing donations to a global distribution program, and investing in production capacity in Africa. Specifically, the G20 leaders asked the World Health Organization and World Trade Organization to compile a report by October on obstacles to greater vaccine access. They also agreed to extend through 2022 a WHO program called Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator, or ACT Accelerator, which was created to develop, produce and distribute vaccines, diagnostics and therapies.
- **Health News Florida: Study Could Ease FDA Blood-Donation Restrictions For Gay Men:** A pilot study with three of the nation's largest blood donation organizations could help the FDA change its blood-donation restrictions for men who have sex with men. Current FDA guidelines say that men who have sex with men must wait three months before they can donate blood. The study by OneBlood, the American Red Cross and Vitalant will determine whether the FDA should replace its three-month waiting period with an individual risk assessment.
- **The New York Times: Ventilation And Testing Can Help Keep U.S. Schools Open In Fall, Studies Suggest:** Several Covid-19 mitigation measures – including improving ventilation, requiring adults to wear face masks and conducting frequent surveillance testing – can help schools stay open and students remain safe, two new studies suggest. The studies, which were published on Friday, come as many school districts are drawing up their plans for the fall. They also follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance that all schools teaching students from kindergarten through grade 12 should continue to have mask-wearing policies through the end of the 2020-21 school year, after the agency's recent move to allow for vaccinated people to forgo wearing masks indoors. The agency also kept in place its suggestions to observe physical distancing and to test for coronavirus infections.