

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Tuesday, May 25, 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

- 1:30pm: President Biden and Vice President Harris meet with the family of George Floyd on the anniversary of his death.

### CONGRESS:

- The Senate is scheduled to vote on confirmation of two of Biden's nominees that have drawn opposition from Republicans – Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to serve as administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Kristen M. Clarke to be an assistant attorney general for the Justice Department.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Centrists Drafting Drug Price Bill Alternatives:** Moderate House Democrats are assembling alternatives to their party's signature drug pricing legislation because they're skeptical a bill to empower the government to negotiate with drugmakers can become law. Two Democrats say they're preparing drug pricing bills aimed at garnering more support than one led by House leaders that would peg prices of drugs in the U.S. to those in foreign countries.
- **CIDRAP: Rapid Test Linked To Quicker Optimal Therapy For Blood Infections:** Implementation of a test that provides rapid bacterial identification and susceptibility results from positive blood cultures shortened the time to optimal antibiotic therapy and reduced unnecessary antibiotic exposure in hospitalized patients with bacteremia, researchers reported late last week in the Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy. The Improving Outcomes and Antibiotic Stewardship for patients with gram-positive bloodstream infections (IOAS) study, led by scientists from Accelerate Diagnostics (which also provided funding), evaluated clinical and antimicrobial stewardship metrics at two hospitals in Arkansas and Iowa following implementation of the Accelerate PhenoTest BC Kit (AXDX), a diagnostic platform that can identify bacteria from blood cultures and provide antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) results up to 40 hours faster than conventional methods.
- **Bloomberg Government: Republicans Plan New Infrastructure Offer:** Senate Republicans are planning to make a new overture to Biden on infrastructure spending, and said they'll continue trying this week to strike a bipartisan deal after rejecting the White House's latest counteroffer of \$1.7 trillion as too costly. "We're not going to walk away," said Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), the lead Republican negotiator.
  - Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) said that the GOP would be willing to spend \$1 trillion over eight years – a figure well above what they said past. He said Republicans

are “fleshing out the numbers” and hopes to have “a sensible offer” by the end of the week.

- **Bloomberg Government: Obamacare Benchmark Premium Falls Again:** The national average benchmark premium for Affordable Care Act marketplace health coverage has fallen for the third straight year, according to new research from the Urban Institute. Increased insurer competition, state reinsurance policies, and expanded Medicaid coverage appear to be fueling the declines, even as premiums for job-based coverage have risen. Average premiums fell in 43 states, while only one state saw an increase higher than 6%, the report found.
- **Stat: Lawmakers Pitch Bill To Create \$30 Billion In Drug Development 'Biobonds':** In a bid to jumpstart drug development, a bipartisan group of lawmakers introduced a bill for the U.S. government to back so-called “biobonds,” which would be used to fund small companies and universities that are researching treatments for unmet medical needs. The LOANS Act, which would authorize a total of \$30 billion over an upcoming three-year period, is designed to reduce what the lawmakers called a “perennial shortage of funds” and to help restart research stalled by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Bloomberg Government: NIH Head to Pitch Single Vaccine for 10 Diseases:** Scientists funded by the \$6.5 billion NIH research center that President Joe Biden wants to establish could pursue a single shot to protect against the top 10 infectious diseases and an mRNA vaccine to shield against common cancers. “ARPA-H represents the kind of transformative idea for biomedical research that only comes along once in a long while,” Francis Collins, head of the National Institutes of Health, said in prepared testimony ahead of a House Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee hearing today.