American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Wednesday, May 26, 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

• 3:30 PM: Vice President Harris meets with bipartisan group of lawmakers to discuss broadband infrastructure.

CONGRESS:

• The Senate will continue consideration of broad legislation that aims to help the U.S. compete with China. The chamber will consider amendments to the measure today, with a vote on final passage as soon as tomorrow.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

• Bloomberg Government: NIH Appropriations: The Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education panel will consider appropriations for the National Institutes of Health and medical research. NIH Director Francis S. Collins and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci will testify.

• The Wall Street Journal: Half Of U.S. Adults Are Fully Vaccinated Against Covid-19: Half of U.S. adults are fully vaccinated against Covid-19, federal officials said Tuesday, a sign of the nation’s progress in fighting the pandemic. More than 129 million people in the U.S. 18 years and older have been vaccinated, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Health authorities want to vaccinate as many people as possible in the U.S.—children and adults—in order to drive down infections and deaths and fully move past the pandemic.

• The Hill: HHS Commits $4.8B For Testing Uninsured People For COVID-19: The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced Tuesday that it is designating $4.8 billion to provide relief funding for COVID-19 testing for uninsured people in the U.S. The administration intends the funding from the American Rescue Plan to ensure the approximately 29 million uninsured U.S. residents have access to COVID-19 testing in order to track where the virus is prevalent for appropriate responses.

• The Hill: Bipartisan Group Of Lawmakers Reintroduces Bill To Give Inmates Medicaid Access: A bipartisan group of lawmakers on Tuesday reintroduced legislation that would provide inmates with access to Medicaid. A press release from Rep. Annie Kuster’s (D-N.H.) office stated that passing the Humane Correctional Health Care Act would repeal Medicaid Inmate Exclusion, which keeps incarcerated Medicaid enrollees from accessing benefits and shifts the “cost burden to states and counties.” Kuster, who sits on the House Subcommittee on Health, was joined by a bipartisan group of House members, including Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), in reintroducing the bill.
• **AP: Senate Confirms Brooks-LaSure To Run Health Care Programs:** The Senate on Tuesday confirmed President Joe Biden’s pick to run U.S. health insurance programs, putting in place a key player who’ll carry out his strategy for expanding affordable coverage and reining in prescription drug costs. Obama-era policy adviser Chiquita Brooks-LaSure will be the first Black person to head the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, which also administers children’s health insurance and the Affordable Care Act. Together, the programs cover more than 130 million people, from newborns to nursing home residents, and play a central role in the nation’s health care system.

• **Bloomberg Government: Providers Testing Uninsured People Get $4.8 Billion:** Community health centers and other service providers will get $4.8 billion to test uninsured people for Covid-19, the Department of Health and Human Services announced. Roughly 29 million people in the U.S. are uninsured, the HHS said. Community health centers provide primary care for more than 30 million people per year, 63% of whom are people of color, federal data show.

• **Bloomberg Government: Senate Panel to Shift to Pre-Pandemic Hearing Rules:** Senate committees plan to roll back some of their virus protocols after the Memorial Day recess, meaning senators and witnesses will again appear in-person at hearings and non-masked. “I expect, following this break, our hearings will look and operate more closely to how they did before the pandemic,” said Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Chairwoman Patty Murray (D-Wash.).