

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, May 3, 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 make stops in Virginia today in an effort to sell his economic package. The president and First Lady Jill Biden will visit an elementary school in Yorktown at 10:30 a.m.
- At 1:05 p.m., the pair will visit an HVAC workshop and then deliver remarks at Tidewater Community College in Norfolk.

CONGRESS:

- The House and Senate have no floor work scheduled this week, but the House will be conducting committee work.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Lowers Obamacare Out-Of-Pocket Maximum:** The Department of Health and Human Services released on Friday a final rule that lowers the maximum out-of-pocket expenses for Obamacare enrollees by \$400 from what it originally projected last year. The rule sets the pay structure and other policies for Obamacare plans in 2022. Patients' cost-sharing – deductibles, co-payments, etc. – will be capped at \$2,900 for people with self-only coverage between 100% and 200% of the federal poverty level. The cap for self-only coverage is \$6,950 for people who make more.
- **Bloomberg Government: AstraZeneca Still Seeks U.S. Vaccine Clearance:** AstraZeneca remains committed to getting U.S. emergency clearance for its coronavirus vaccine whose public acceptance has been hurt by a series of missteps and rare side effects. The U.K. drugmaker, which has promised not to profit from its coronavirus shot during the pandemic, said it's still seeking an emergency use authorization in the first half of 2021 and working with U.S. officials on the filing. AstraZeneca had previously said that it would apply for the authorization by mid-April.
- **Bloomberg Government: Bristol Myers Squibb's sBLA for Opdivo Gets FDA Priority Review:** Bristol Myers Squibb said the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has accepted the supplemental Biologics License Application for Opdivo or nivolumab and has assigned a Prescription Drug User Fee Act goal date of Sept. 3. The adjuvant treatment is for patients with surgically resected, high-risk muscle-invasive urothelial carcinoma. The priority review was based on results from the CheckMate -274 trial where Opdivo demonstrated a statistically significant and clinically meaningful increase in disease-free survival compared with placebo, regardless of patients' PD-L1 expression levels.

- **Fierce Healthcare: Stakeholders Laud 'Incremental Improvement' To Star Ratings Methodology But Call for Further Updates:** Healthcare organizations are always on the lookout for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS') annual hospital star ratings, but this week's release of the quality measures carried a bit more weight for stakeholders than in years prior. Unveiled Wednesday, the latest star ratings represent CMS' first crack at a long-awaited refinement of the methodology it uses to generate quality scores ranging from one to five stars.
- **AP: Employers, Insurers Push to Make Virtual Visits Regular Care:** Make telemedicine your first choice for most doctor visits. That's the message some U.S. employers and insurers are sending with a new wave of care options. Amazon and several insurers have started or expanded virtual-first care plans to get people to use telemedicine routinely, even for planned visits like annual checkups. They're trying to make it easier for patients to connect with regular help by using remote care that grew explosively during the COVID-19 pandemic.