

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, May 7, 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

- The Labor Department today will release employment figures for April.
- President Biden will speak from the White House at 11:30 a.m. on the jobs report.
  - Later today, Biden will meet with his “Jobs Cabinet” at 3:15 p.m., before department for Camp David at 5:30 p.m.

### CONGRESS:

- The House and Senate have no floor work scheduled this week, but the House will be conducting committee work.
- The Senate returns Monday following a week-long break, with floor work focused on nominees. The Senate will consider the nominations of Andrea Joan Palm to be deputy secretary of Health and Human Services and Cynthia Marten to be deputy secretary of Education.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg: Medicare to Pay Doctors More for Antibody Treatment:** The Medicare agency is bumping up payment of a Covid-19 antibody therapy to boost the underutilized therapy that’s shown promise in keeping patients out of the hospital. Health providers can get \$750 for bringing a treatment known as monoclonal antibodies to the patient at their home, hotel, or whenever they’re staying. Infusion centers and other settings offering the antibody treatment will see the average payment rate increase to \$450 from \$310.
- **Bloomberg: Package Seeks to Boost Black Maternal Health:** A package of twelve bills to improve Black maternal health in the U.S. is getting a renewed push from House lawmakers. Lawmakers on the House Oversight and Reform Committee weighed the package at hearing yesterday. Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-Ill.), one of its primary cosponsors, told reporters before the hearing that the biggest challenge to passing the package is that there are seven committees with jurisdiction over it. And just one – the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee – has favorably reported a bill to the full House.
  - Oversight Chair Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) said she planned to write to the heads of the relevant panels to ask them to mark up the legislation, and told reporters she intended to ask the Government Accountability Office to study the legislative package. “Health equity for Black people is attainable as long as we address racial disparities with the urgency, empathy, and focus that this issue requires,” she said during the hearing.

- **CNBC: Pfizer And BioNTech Begin The Process Of Seeking Full U.S. Approval For Their Covid Vaccine:** Pfizer will have to demonstrate that it can reliably produce the vaccines to win full clearance. If approved, the companies could market their shots directly to consumers and possibly change the pricing of the doses. It also allows the shot to stay on the market once the pandemic is over and the U.S. is no longer considered in an “emergency.”
- **Modern Healthcare: COVID-19 Vaccination Reduces Asymptomatic Infection Risk:** Receiving a COVID-19 vaccination dramatically reduces the chances of contracting the virus, either in symptomatic or asymptomatic form. That's according to new research from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital published in JAMA on Thursday. Almost 8,000 hospital workers – both vaccinated and unvaccinated – were regularly tested between Dec. 2020 and March 2021. The results come as demand for the vaccine slows in part due to hesitancy, and a recent White House push to get at least 70% of U.S. adults one dose by July 4th.
- **Stat: Amazon Care Signs First Customer For Burgeoning Health Business:** Amazon Care signed its first enterprise customer this week, a significant milestone as the virtual-first health care platform looks to expand its footprint. The client, Precor, is a fitness business that was recently acquired by fitness technology company Peloton for \$420 million in cash. Although small financially, the deal is a significant opener for Care, which in recent months has laid the groundwork for a national expansion, as STAT first reported in March.
- **Modern Healthcare: Providers Fear HIPAA Changes Conflict With Interoperability, Info Blocking Rules:** Providers, patient advocates and app developers broadly support a Trump-era rule that would make it easier to share patient health information, but they remain divided over how far the changes should go and concerned about inconsistencies across regulations, according to comments on the proposed rule due Thursday. Hospitals and medical groups said that easing the exchange of health information and allowing patients greater access to and control of their health records could enable better care coordination and management. But they're worried about giving more access to smartphone apps and other entities that aren't covered by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.
- **New Orleans Times-Picayune: Louisiana House OKs Bill To Let Nurse Practitioners Work Without Doctors:** The Louisiana House of Representatives has paved the way for nurse practitioners to practice independently of doctors, approving a bill Wednesday to keep in place an emergency executive order that Gov. John Bel Edwards issued earlier in the pandemic. The bill passed with a 60-41 vote and will proceed to the Senate. House Bill 495 has divided medical professionals. Doctors say patient safety is at stake, and nurses say they already practice relatively independently and that giving them more leeway will fill a worrisome gap in a state with a shortage of physicians.