

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, June 11, 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 participate today in the opening session of the Group of Seven summit in Cornwall, U.K. The president will work to advance U.S. policy priorities on public health, economic recovery, and inclusive growth, according to the White House schedule. In the evening, Biden will participate in a reception and dinner with the other G-7 leaders and the U.K. royal family.

CONGRESS:

- The Senate is out. The House meets at 11:30 a.m. for a pro forma session.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Grassley to Meet Democrats on Drug-Pricing Bill:** Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) plans to meet next week with House Democrats who've objected to their party's signature drug-pricing proposal, he told reporters yesterday. Grassley said he'll meet with some of the 10 House Democrats who wrote to Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in May with concerns about her bill (H.R. 3) to empower the government to negotiate with drugmakers.
 - Grassley opposes the drug-pricing negotiation bills, but in the 116th Congress, he pushed a drug pricing package that included trying to cap price increases for some medicines for Medicare beneficiaries and limiting what seniors pay for medicine with Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), who's now the Senate Finance Committee chairman. Grassley says he's not getting support for his plan from Democrats anymore, but hopes to build bridges now for a future bipartisan deal.
 - "I won't get traction with Democrats until they realize that anything that they're talking about won't get 60 votes," Grassley said, referring to the 60 votes need to advance legislation to the Senate floor. Wyden said yesterday that he wants to build on the package he negotiated with Grassley, but wants to empower the government to negotiate with drugmakers.
- **Modern Healthcare: Poor EHR Design Leads To Nurse Burnout, Higher Surgical Patient Mortality, Study Finds:** Poorly designed electronic health record systems may accelerate clinician burnout and increase risks safety risks for patients having surgery, according to a new study published in Medical Care, the journal of the medical care section of the American Public Health Association. The study, which included 12,004 nurses, 1.3 million surgical patients and 343 hospitals in four states, found that surgical patients receiving care in hospitals with poor EHR usability were 21% more likely to die in the hospital after their

procedures and 6% more likely to be readmitted within 30 days than those being treated in hospitals with better EHR usability.

- **CNBC: Third Member Of Prestigious FDA Panel Resigns Over Approval Of Biogen's Alzheimer's Drug:** A third member of a key Food and Drug Administration advisory panel has resigned over the agency's controversial decision to approve Biogen's new Alzheimer's drug, Aduhelm, CNBC has learned. Dr. Aaron Kesselheim, a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, said the agency's decision on Biogen "was probably the worst drug approval decision in recent U.S. history," according to his resignation letter obtained by CNBC.
- **Bloomberg Government: OSHA Limits Long-Awaited Virus Rule to Health Care:** The first nationwide emergency workplace safety rule, requiring health-care employers to protect workers against on-the-job Covid-19 infection, has been published on OSHA's website. The emergency temporary standard unveiled yesterday applies only in the health-care industry and will be supplemented by voluntary guidance for other sectors. The rule will take effect once published in the Federal Register.
- **Stat: CRISPR Treatment For Blood Diseases Shows Promise In Small Study:** Twenty-two patients with inherited blood disorders were free of severe pain and the need for transfusions months after receiving an experimental genome-editing medicine, more evidence the CRISPR-based treatment could be a functional cure. The therapy, jointly developed by Vertex Pharmaceuticals and CRISPR Therapeutics, is designed to treat sickle cell disease and beta-thalassemia by boosting the body's production of hemoglobin. According to data from two clinical trials presented at the European Hematology Association annual meeting Friday, all patients in both studies have been free from symptoms of the diseases since their treatment and have not needed blood transfusions.
- **Modern Healthcare: Mental Health Startup IPOs Boom As Insurers Add Benefits:** Shares for mental health company LifeStance Health soared during its public debut Thursday, with the Scottsdale, Ariz.-based startup reaching a nearly \$8 billion valuation after raising \$720 million in its initial public offering. LifeStance, which is owned by private equity firm TPG, claims to be one of the largest mental health platforms in the nation, employing more than 3,300 licensed mental health professionals across 27 states and 370 centers. The company offers a mix of in-person and virtual care for its 357,000 patients, who can suffer from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and more. In 2020, the startup conducted 2.3 million patient visits on the platform, according to its S-1 filed in May with the Securities and Exchange Commission.
- **Bloomberg Government: CRFP Says Budget Would Extend Medicare Solvency:** The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a nonprofit think tank, said President Joe Biden's budget, if enacted, would extend Medicare solvency. Much of this improvement comes from diverting existing revenue sources to Medicare's Hospital Insurance trust fund. But including only new revenue and savings, the Biden budget would close only 30% of the 30-year solvency gap, the think tank says,