

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Tuesday, June 15, 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

- Biden remains in Brussels today, where he plans bilateral meetings with Belgian King Philippe and Prime Minister Alexander De Croo. Later today, the president meets with European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, before participating in a U.S.-EU summit. Biden then heads to Geneva this evening, where he will meet with Swiss President Guy Parmelin.

CONGRESS:

- The House is scheduled to vote on 22 bills under expedited procedure that indicates broad support.
- The Senate plans to vote on Lina Khan, Biden's nominee to fill a seat on the Federal Trade Commission.
- [Click here](#) for a complete list of today's hearings and markups.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Axios: Most Hospitals Aren't Complying With A Federal Price Transparency Rule:** Most hospitals aren't fully complying with a new federal rule requiring them to make their prices available, according to a new study in JAMA Internal Medicine. The goal of the regulation is to allow price shopping and, thus lower costs, although it's unclear whether it'd have this effect.
- **Bloomberg Government: Transplant Hospitals Fight Formula:** A second federal appeals court is wading into a long-running dispute over how best to allocate organs from deceased donors. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit will hear arguments June 17 over a policy change in how kidneys are distributed. Transplant candidates within a 250 nautical-mile circle around a donor's hospital now get priority. Before the change took effect March 15, geographic boundaries roughly followed state lines.
- **Reuters: Delta Variant Doubles Risk Of COVID Hospitalisation - Scottish Study:** The Delta coronavirus variant doubles the risk of hospitalisation compared with the previously dominant variant in Britain, but two doses of vaccine still provide strong protection, a Scottish study found on Monday. The study said early evidence suggested the protection from vaccines against the Delta variant, first identified in India, might be lower than the effectiveness against the Alpha variant, first identified in Kent, southeast England.

- **Bloomberg Government: ACA Sign-Ups Top 1.2 Million:** More than 1.2 million people have signed up for Obamacare marketplace health coverage through HealthCare.gov through the special enrollment period that began Feb. 15. That includes 376,000 in May alone, the HHS reported yesterday. In addition, 1 million new and returning consumers have premiums that cost \$10 or less per month, due to advance premium tax credits available as of April 1 through the American Rescue Plan.
- **Bloomberg: Third Shot Could Help Boost Covid Defense In Transplant Patients:** A vaccine booster shot could help beef up protection against Covid-19 for some organ transplant recipients, a group fearful their suppressed immune systems may leave them defenseless as pandemic restrictions end. A third of organ recipients who had no antibodies after their second dose developed them after a third dose, according to a small study reported Monday in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. The researchers also found that participants with just a small rise in their antibodies after their two-dose regimens had higher levels after they got an added shot.
- **Modern Healthcare: Centene To Pay \$143 Million For Overcharging Medicaid For Drugs:** Centene Corp. will pay a combined \$143 million to Ohio and Mississippi to settle allegations that the St. Louis-based insurer overcharged states' Medicaid departments for drugs. The company will also reserve \$1.1 billion for future settlements related to its Envolve pharmacy benefit manager, which it has now restructured to serve solely as a third-party administrator to process customer claims. A Centene spokesperson declined to provide information about other investigations currently pending against the payer's pharmacy benefit manager. The settlement will benefit, at least in part, a group of plaintiffs represented by the Liston & Deas and Cohen & Milstein law firm, which reportedly is consulting at least four other states about their pharmacy benefit manager programs.
- **Stat: Mississippi Sues Drug Makers And PBMs Over The Cost Of Insulin:** In a first-of-its-kind move, the Mississippi attorney general last week filed a lawsuit accusing several drug makers and pharmacy benefit managers of conspiring to set prices for insulin, the life-savings diabetes treatment that has become a poster child for the high cost of prescription medicines. The lawsuit alleged that the manufacturers benefited from a scheme in which prices were “artificially” inflated to win placement on formularies, the list of medicines for which insurance is provided. And pharmacy benefit managers profited by receiving “secret” rebates from the manufacturers and also through their own mail-order pharmacy sales.