

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Wednesday, June 16, 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 meets with Swiss President Guy Parmelin at 1:10PM
- President Biden holds a bilateral meeting with President Vladimir Putin for the U.S.-Russia Summit at 1:35 PM

CONGRESS:

- The House plans to vote on a bill to compel publicly traded companies to disclose information on climate risks, political spending, tax jurisdictions, and executive pay raises.
- The Senate is scheduled to vote on White House nominees to the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Modern Healthcare: Trump Rule On Community Health Center Insulin, Epi-Pen Discounts May End:** The Biden administration wants to eliminate a rule targeting community health clinics in the 340B program. The rule, which was issued by the Trump administration but never took effect, would have required community health centers pass the 340B discounts they get for insulin and Epi-Pens to patients. The Biden administration argued Tuesday the rule would put "undue administrative costs and burdens" on health centers.
- **Bloomberg Government: House Sets Appropriations Markups:** The House Appropriations Committee announced the schedule for markups of the fiscal 2022 spending bills. Subcommittee markups begin June 24 and full committee markups begin June 29, the panel said in a statement.
- **Bloomberg Government: Nominations:** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee meets to vote on nominations including Dawn Myers O'Connell to be assistant secretary for preparedness and response, and Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon to be assistant secretary for mental health and substance use, both for the Health and Human Services Department.
- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Policies:** The House Education and Labor Committee plans a hearing with Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra on the agency's policies and priorities.

- **Bloomberg Government: Labor Board Plots Worker-Focused Outreach Push:** The Biden administration is seeking an influx of cash for the National Labor Relations Board to educate workers about their right to form a union – an effort that could prompt new organizing and is already drawing opposition from business lobbyists. The president’s budget proposal for fiscal 2022 calls for \$2.1 million to launch programs to inform workers about their rights under the National Labor Relations Act.
- **Modern Healthcare: MedPAC Wants To End Skilled Nursing Facility Incentive Program:** A panel advising Congress on Medicare policy recommended Tuesday eliminating and replacing the skilled nursing facility value-based purchasing program, arguing it is fundamentally flawed. Congress passed the VBP program in 2014 to improve quality in skilled nursing facilities, but the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission says the program's single measure of performance – hospital readmissions – doesn't fully capture healthcare quality or address variations between facilities in patient populations. Under the program, MedPAC found that SNFs treating higher shares of dual-eligible beneficiaries or facilities with more medically complex patients were more likely to be penalized under the program.
- **AP: More Evidence Suggests COVID-19 Was In US By Christmas 2019:** A new analysis of blood samples from 24,000 Americans taken early last year is the latest and largest study to suggest that the new coronavirus popped up in the U.S. in December 2019 – weeks before cases were first recognized by health officials. The analysis is not definitive, and some experts remain skeptical, but federal health officials are increasingly accepting a timeline in which small numbers of COVID-19 infections may have occurred in the U.S. before the world ever became aware of a dangerous new virus erupting in China.
- **The Hill: Large Study Says Nearly 25 Percent Of COVID-19 Patients Have Long-Lasting Symptoms:** A detailed new report suggests that nearly one quarter of patients who tested positive for COVID-19 continued to struggle with side effects at least one month after their initial diagnosis, adding to the burgeoning knowledge about the coronavirus that took over the world in 2020. Researchers looked at more than 1.9 million patients without serious comorbidities like cancer, kidney disease, and hepatitis. This makes it one of the largest comprehensive COVID-19 surveillance studies so far.