

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, June 17, 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 sign the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law, and deliver remarks with Vice President Kamala Harris at 3:30 PM

CONGRESS:

- The House will vote today to repeal the authorization for the war in Iraq that began in 2003.
- The Senate plans to vote on two of Biden's nominees for deputy positions at the Interior and Homeland Security department.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: More Time Needed on FDA Pick, Becerra Says:** Manufacturers of prescription drugs and medical devices are on pins and needles as they await news of who will lead the Food and Drug Administration, and HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said the decision will come once Biden finds time to make that crucial decision. "This is one of those positions where obviously the president is very interested because FDA is just not another agency – it's a critical agency," Becerra said.
- **Bloomberg Government: Care Workers:** The Senate Special Committee on Aging holds a hearing on care workers, family caregivers, seniors and people with disabilities.
- **Modern Healthcare: Federal Judge Keeps 340B Suit Against HHS Alive:** A federal judge on Wednesday refused HHS' request to dismiss AstraZeneca's challenge to a December advisory opinion from Health and Human Resources Administration blocking drugmakers from charging a covered entity more than the ceiling price for 340B drugs. U.S. District Judge Leonard Stark in Delaware didn't rule on the wisdom of the policy but said that the government's position on drugmakers' obligations under the 340B program had shifted over time. Congress didn't clearly address the issue of contract pharmacies when it created the drug discount program more than two decades ago, he said.
- **Bloomberg Government: Sanders Preps for Drug Provision in Reconciliation:** Democrats on the Senate Budget Committee said they're unified in support of broad reconciliation instructions that would allow members to pass major legislation without Republican support, even as bipartisan infrastructure talks continue.
 - Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) met with the 11 Democrats on the panel yesterday, and the group agreed to move ahead with reconciliation instructions

for a wide array of legislative priorities, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) told reporters afterward. A measure on prescription drug pricing “certainly is going to be in this,” Budget Chairman Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) told reporters after the meeting.

- **Axios: Anthem Joins Insurer-Backed Generic Drugs Effort:** A new initiative aiming to create cheaper generic drugs for retail pharmacies signed on Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield — one of the largest insurers in the U.S. — as well as drug manufacturer Catalent as partners, officials announced this morning. The newly-named CivicaScript, a subsidiary of the hospital-owned non-profit drug maker Civica Rx, is the latest effort by the health care industry to get control of generic drug prices.
- **Bloomberg Government: Committee Approves Biden OSHA Pick:** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee voted 13-9 for Doug Parker to lead the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, advancing his nomination to the full chamber. It wasn't immediately clear when Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) may tee up votes to limit floor debate on the nominee, the next procedural step before he can receive a confirmation vote.
- **Bloomberg Government: New York Push to Rein In Drug Plans Tests High Court Ruling:** New York is poised to become one of the first states to impose more stringent rules on pharmacy-benefit managers since the Supreme Court late last year swept away a longstanding federal legal barrier. States including Texas and Tennessee have enacted fresh restrictions on PBMs. In New York, lawmakers this month revived a bill that would bring the industry under closer state oversight. Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) vetoed the measure two years ago, saying at the time it would be pre-empted by federal law. Pharmacists support it, while drug plans say it would raise costs for consumers.