

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, June 28, 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 will welcome Israel President Reuven Rivlin to the White House at 4 p.m.

CONGRESS:

- The House will consider eleven measures under expedited procedure that indicates broad, bipartisan support.
- The Senate is not in session this week.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **AP: New ASU Havasu Program Aims To Help Address Nurse Shortage:** Even before the pandemic, a scarcity of nurses was an ongoing concern in Arizona especially in more rural areas. An Arizona State University nursing program, set to debut at the school's Lake Havasu City campus this fall, aims to put a dent in that shortage. ASU Havasu, which is still a young campus at 9 years old, got approval in April from the Arizona Board of Nursing to offer a 12-month bachelor of science degree in nursing. The program is expected to draw more than 30 new students, the Today's News-Herald reported.
- **Stat: Experts Debate The Value Of Digital Coaching For Type 2 Diabetes:** Even before the pandemic drove an extreme shift toward telemedicine, diabetes care was leading the march toward digital care. A crop of health care companies including Onduo, One Drop, Lark Health, Omada, Livongo, and Virta Health have built businesses on the idea that virtual coaching and remote monitoring can help people with diabetes keep their glucose levels in healthier ranges. Next year, estimates suggest the market for digital diabetes care will exceed \$700 million.
- **Bloomberg Government: GOP Senators Say Biden's Deal on Track:** Republican senators said yesterday Biden's assurance that he isn't linking a bipartisan \$579 billion infrastructure plan to a larger tax and spending bill will allow negotiations to move ahead.
 - Rob Portman (Ohio), a lead infrastructure negotiator for Republicans, said he "was very glad to see the president clarify" remarks he made Friday, which Republicans took as a threat to veto the infrastructure bill by connecting it with the bigger legislation that the GOP opposes. "And I'm glad they've now been de-linked and it's very clear that we can go forward with a bipartisan bill that's broadly popular, not just among members of Congress, but the American people." Portman said on ABC's "This Week" yesterday.

- Biden suggested after an infrastructure deal was struck on Thursday that his signature on any infrastructure bill was contingent on Congress also passing the much larger tax and social-spending measure that Democrats are preparing. On Saturday, he issued a statement saying it “was certainly not my intent” to create the impression he was threatening to veto “the very plan I had just agreed to.”
- **KHN: Doctors’ Lobby Scores ‘Major Victory’ On Bill To Hold Physicians Accountable:** The board that licenses and disciplines doctors in California is failing to hold bad actors accountable, endangering patients in the process. That’s the verdict of state lawmakers and patient advocates who have been working for years to reform the Medical Board of California. But an attempt this year to give the board more money and power to investigate complaints of fraud, gross negligence, sexual misconduct and other misbehavior is under attack from one of the most politically potent forces in California’s Capitol: doctors themselves. And so far, it seems, the doctors are winning.
- **Bloomberg Government: Senators Want CFPB to Tackle Medical Debt:** Sens. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) on Friday called on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to “address medical debt as Americans face steep bills, especially as a result of Covid-19,” according to a statement. The pair sent a letter to acting CFPB Director Dave Uejio, requesting his agency take steps to halt certain medical debt collection practices.
- **NBC News: Biden's Pledge To Boost Home Caregiver Funding Excluded From Infrastructure Deal:** When Morgan Champion brought her 74-year-old father home to live with her, she had little time to prepare. It was early May when she and her sister had found him emaciated and sitting in a soiled diaper at his memory care facility in Tallahassee, Florida, after the pandemic lockdown finally lifted. “We really felt like dad was in danger,” Champion said. The family needed to get him out as quickly as possible. ... “I want him to have the dignity of being taken care of well,” Champion, 34, said. “It’s definitely been a struggle.”
- **Modern Healthcare: Senators Urge Biden Administration To Protect Patients From Harsh Medical Debt Collections:** Senate Democrats are calling on federal authorities to take action on aggressive medical debt collection, citing reports about hospitals suing patients over unpaid bills. In a letter to the the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), Democratic Sens. Chris Murphy (Conn.) and Chris Van Hollen (Md.) recommended a series of actions to protect consumers' credit scores, provide patients with more information about financial assistance and coverage options, and give them more time to dispute or resolve debts before they are sent to collections.
- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Pulls Medicaid Work Rules in Two States:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services continued its attack on work requirements in state Medicaid programs, informing Arizona and Indiana that it’s withdrawing approval for must-work provisions approved during the Trump administration. Requiring poor adults to work as a condition of receiving health care would likely hurt Medicaid enrollment without increasing employment, the HHS said.