

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Thursday, June 3, 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 has no public events scheduled.

### CONGRESS:

- The House and Senate are out this week.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **CIDRAP: Study Identifies COVID Risks For Kidney Dialysis Patients:** Among patients with kidney failure who underwent dialysis at clinics several times a week, the risk of COVID-19 infection was highest in those who were older, had diabetes, lived in communities with high coronavirus prevalence, and received dialysis at clinics serving more patients, finds a study yesterday in the Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology. Led by British researchers, the study also showed that COVID-19 infection risks were lowest among patients who received dialysis in clinics with more isolation rooms and mask policies for all patients, including those with no coronavirus symptoms.
- **Bloomberg Government: Drug Pricing Advocates Push Polls to Centrists:** Advocates for empowering the federal government to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies are promoting surveys showing the policy is popular in four key states in an attempt to pressure lawmakers on the issue.
  - More than 80% of likely voters in Arizona, Delaware, New Jersey and West Virginia support drug price negotiation legislation, according to polls by West Health and the polling and public affairs firm, Global Strategy Group. Importantly, the states are home to Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.), and Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) – seen as key players in the Senate for drug pricing legislation.
  - Manchin and Sinema have bucked their party on major issues and Menendez has opposed some drug price negotiation legislation in the past. Groups pushing for passage of H.R. 3, House Democratic leadership’s flagship drug pricing bill, such as Protect Our Care, held events with local lawmakers from New Jersey and West Virginia showcasing the poll results yesterday.
- **KHN: Expanding Insurance Coverage Is Top Priority For New Medicare-Medicaid Chief:** The new head of the federal agency that oversees health benefits for nearly 150 million Americans and \$1 trillion in federal spending said in one of her first interviews that her top priorities will be broadening insurance coverage and ensuring health equity. “We’ve seen through the pandemic what happens when people don’t have health insurance and how

important it is," said Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, who was confirmed by the Senate to lead the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on May 25 and sworn in on May 27. "Our focus is going to be on making sure regulations and policies are going to be focused on improving coverage."

- **Fate of ACA in Limbo at High Court:** The Supreme Court is expected to release a decision any day now on the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act, a verdict that could create chaos if the signature health-care law is invalidated and make 30 million people lose their coverage, according to a report from the Economic Policy Institute. But legal scholars on both sides of the ideological line doubt the justices will go that far.
- **Stat: Industry Payments To Doctors Are Associated With Increased Prescribing Of Long-Acting Insulin:** Amid ongoing concern over the cost of insulin, a new study finds that payments made by manufacturers to physicians were associated with a larger number of more expensive prescriptions for long-acting versions covered by Medicare. More than 51,800 physicians received industry payments worth \$22.3 million in 2016, and they wrote, on average, 135 prescriptions for the diabetes treatment in 2017, compared with 77 prescriptions written by doctors who did not receive payments from insulin makers. The larger number of prescriptions resulted in an average Medicare Part D claim of \$300, which was \$71 more than claims generated by doctors who did not receive payments.