

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, June 7, 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

- The president will host North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the White House today. The two will meet at 4:30 p.m. to discuss the June 14 NATO summit in Brussels as well as challenges from Russia and China, according to Biden's schedule.

### CONGRESS:

- The Senate returns today, with plans to consider the nomination of Julien Xavier Neals to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. House lawmakers will meet for committee work, with no floor action planned.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Senate Appropriations Hearings:** The Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee will weigh appropriations for the Health and Human Services Department on Wednesday, where HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra will testify. The Senate Appropriations Agriculture-FDA Subcommittee will weigh spending for the Food and Drug Administration on Thursday, where Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock will testify.
- **Stat: Carbon Health Dives Into Digital Diabetes Care, Acquires Steady Health:** As health care providers large and small prepare for a transition from virtual to in-person care, one startup is carefully hedging its bets. As it builds toward its goal to open 1,500 clinics by 2025, primary care provider Carbon Health has acquired digital diabetes clinic Steady Health, marking the company's first foray into virtual care for chronic conditions.
- **Bloomberg Government: Uphill Fight Versus Pharma on Orphan Drugs:** Legislation meant to prevent drugmakers from blocking new opioid addiction treatment medicines from coming to market faces tough prospects in the Senate this year, even though advocates say it's a layup for lawmakers. The bill looks to fix an issue in the nation's orphan drug development rules that was exploited largely by one company, Indivior, for a blockbuster opioid treatment. Supporters say it's hard to argue against clearing the way for addiction treatment medicines as overdose deaths rise.
- **KHN: Covid Was A Tipping Point For Telehealth. If Some Have Their Way, Virtual Visits Are Here To Stay:** As the covid crisis wanes and life approaches normal across the U.S., health industry leaders and many patient advocates are pushing Congress and the Biden administration to preserve the pandemic-fueled expansion of telehealth that has transformed

how millions of Americans see the doctor. The broad effort reaches across the nation's diverse health care system, bringing together consumer groups with health insurers, state Medicaid officials, physician organizations and telehealth vendors.

- **Bloomberg Government: ACA Sign-Up Helpers to See \$80 Million Boost in Grants:** The Biden administration will provide an \$80 million boost in grant funding – the largest ever – for Obamacare “navigators” that help connect the uninsured with marketplace coverage. The funding, announced Friday by Department of Health and Human Services, will only be available to applicants that want to serve as navigators in states that use the federal HealthCare.gov marketplace. States with their own Obamacare marketplaces provide their own navigator funding and awards.
- **Bloomberg Government: Obamacare Tops Supreme Court Agenda in Final Weeks:** The Supreme Court heads into the home stretch of Justice Amy Coney Barrett's first term with a list of big-money and culturally divisive cases still to be decided. Between now and the end of June, the court is due to rule in 23 argued cases, including the latest Republican challenge to the Affordable Care Act and a multibillion-dollar suit against the federal government by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac shareholders. The court is scheduled to issue the first of those remaining opinions today and Thursday.
- **Stat: Fate's Natural Killer Cells Induce Responses In Blood Cancer Patients:** Fate Therapeutics said Friday that an experimental, off-the-shelf immunotherapy made from so-called natural killer cells induced complete tumor responses in just over half of the patients with advanced lymphoma treated in an early-stage clinical trial. The 56% complete response rate reported for the Fate cancer treatment, called FT516, is still preliminary – and assessed from just 11 patients – but it is similar to efficacy reported with other types of cell therapy. However, the durability of the response to FT516 remains an important, unanswered question.
- **Bloomberg Government: Nominations:** The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will hold a nomination hearing tomorrow for Dawn O'Connell to be assistant secretary for preparedness and response and Miriam Delphin-Rittmon to be assistant secretary for mental health and substance use, both within the Health and Human Services Department.