

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Tuesday, July 13, 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

- 2:50 p.m. - The President delivers remarks on protecting the right to vote in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

CONGRESS:

- The House Appropriations Committee meets to mark up the fiscal 2022 Defense and Homeland Security appropriations bills.
- The Senate plans to vote on two of Biden's nominees to the State and Labor departments.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Democratic Bill Would Expand Affordable Health Care:** Sens. Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) and Jon Ossoff (D-Ga.), introduced legislation to expand health care coverage to more than 4 million Americans. The bill would provide health care insurance to Americans with low incomes in the twelve states that haven't expanded their state Medicaid programs under the Affordable Care Act.
- **Stat: Biden Order Would Pause Rule Forbidding March-In Rights To Lower Drug Costs:** In a little-noticed move, the Biden administration has hit the pause button on a rule that would prevent the federal government from using a controversial legal provision for combating the high prices of products developed with taxpayer dollars. The move amounts to an about-face after the White House left the rule, which was proposed earlier this year by the Trump administration, on its regulatory agenda last month. However, the latest decision suggests the Biden administration is responding to pressure to widen access to medicines and vaccines, especially those funded in part by the U.S. treasury, in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Bloomberg Government: Medicare Physician Pay Proposal Gets White House OK:** The White House completed its review of a proposed rule to revise Medicare payments in 2022 under the physician fee schedule and to make other payment policy changes under Medicare "Part B," which covers outpatient care, medical services, and supplies. The proposed rule can now be released at any time by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.
- **Bloomberg Government: Senate Democrats Split on Budget Plans:** Biden met with Senate Budget Committee Chair Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) yesterday as Democratic lawmakers wrangled to find consensus on legislation designed to carry most of the president's \$4 trillion longer-term economic agenda. Later, at the Capitol, Sanders said negotiations had progressed over

the July 4 congressional recess but there wasn't yet a deal. Sanders has outlined a \$6 trillion proposal covering Biden's agenda as well as an expansion of Medicare, additional climate change items, immigration reform and a permanent extension of the child care tax credit. Senate Democrats remain divided on the size and scope of that fast-track budget reconciliation bill.

- Maryland Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen, a Budget Committee member, said there is a "decent chance" a lawmaker group that met last night will be able to finalize a deal tonight. He said that everything remained on the table. Democrats said they are trying to come to a deal by Thursday in order to bring the budget up for potential Senate floor votes next week.
- **Modern Healthcare: Safety-Net Hospitals Hit Hard By Pandemic Could Lose Access To 340B Drugs:** Some hospitals serving large volumes of low-income patients are at risk of getting kicked out of a popular federal discount drug program as the fallout from the pandemic's unprecedented impact on healthcare providers continues. The 340B program, which allows qualifying hospitals and providers to buy deeply discounted drugs from manufacturers, has strict eligibility requirements and an annual recertification process. Providers must show that a certain percentage of patients they served in the year prior were low-income or on Medicaid.
- **Modern Healthcare: Atlantic Health, NYU Langone Health Form Transplant Alliance:** Atlantic Health System and NYU Langone Health will coordinate heart and liver transplant care via a clinical affiliation, the New Jersey and New York not-for-profit health systems announced Monday. Atlantic clinicians will provide pre- and post-transplant care at Morristown Medical Center's Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute and Overlook Medical Center while physicians at the NYU Langone Transplant Institute will perform the surgeries.
- **Bloomberg Government: 'Down Payment' on Biden Biomedical Agency:** The NIH will receive less than half of what the Biden administration requested for its new big ticket entity known as ARPA-H, as a House spending panel seeks a heavier medical research boost across the board. The House Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee approved its 2022 spending plan by a voice vote yesterday.
- **KHN: Teen Volunteers Get A Foot In The Door For Nursing Home Careers:** Jasmine De Moya, 17, has dreamed for years of working in the medical field, and she yearned to spend time with older people, missing her grandparents, who live in the Dominican Republic. A program sponsored by the New Jewish Home health system in New York City that combines volunteering and free training for entry-level health jobs, career coaching and assistance on her college prep is helping make her hopes come alive. Over the past three years, Jasmine has learned a lot about caring for older people, from the importance of speaking slowly and being gentle with frail residents who may have hearing or comprehension problems to how to brush their teeth or bathe them.
- **Politico: Top U.S. Officials See Booster Shots As Inevitable:** Biden administration health officials believe the most vulnerable Americans will eventually need coronavirus booster shots – but they are still debating how quickly that should happen, two administration officials said. The internal deliberations have stretched on for months as health officials watch for signs of waning immunity among the vaccinated. The talks have included extensive behind-the-

scenes coordination between the administration and drug companies manufacturing Covid-19 vaccines.

- **Axios: House Democrats Advance Spending Bill Without Hyde Amendment:** House Democrats on Monday advanced a spending bill for the Department of Health and Human Services excluding the Hyde Amendment, a provision that bans federal funding for most abortions. The bill follows President Biden's proposed 2022 budget that would see the lifting of the ban. This is the first time since it became law in 1976 that the Hyde Amendment has been excluded from the spending bill.