

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Wednesday, July 14, 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

- 3:00 p.m. – President Biden to meet with a bipartisan group of Governors and Mayors to discuss the importance of the critical investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework to States and cities across the country.

CONGRESS:

- The Senate votes today on two of Biden’s nominees to the Labor Department and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
- Secretary of State Antony Blinken will give a closed-door classified briefing to senators about Iran today, according to the Washington Post.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **KHN: As Congress Wrestles With Plans To Expand Medicare, Becerra Says Any One Will Do:** The Biden administration will support whatever expansions to Medicare Congress is willing to make, Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said Tuesday. Democratic lawmakers on Capitol Hill are working on plans both to add benefits to the health program for seniors and to lower its eligibility age from 65 to 60. But the efforts are mired in competing priorities among different wings of the party as they try to push through a spending plan this year that Republicans have vowed to oppose. President Joe Biden called for the change in Medicare age eligibility while campaigning in 2020.
- **USA Today: Senate Democrats Reach \$3.5 Trillion Deal For Biden's 'Human Infrastructure' Agenda, Medicare Expansion:** Senate Democrats reached an agreement Tuesday night on a \$3.5 trillion budget plan that would expand Medicare, fund climate-change initiatives and fulfill other parts of President Joe Biden’s economic agenda that Democrats hope to pass on top of a bipartisan infrastructure bill. After a lengthy meeting among Democrats on the Senate’s Budget Committee, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, N.Y., announced the agreement for a budget reconciliation package that would fund what Biden has called "human infrastructure."
- **Bloomberg Government: Lawmakers Face Push to Limit Drugmaker Deals as Prices Skyrocket:** Lawmakers will have a hard time objecting to legislation aimed at lowering prescription drug prices by limiting deals between name brand and generic manufacturers, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) said yesterday. “The stakes could not be higher,” Klobuchar, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee’s antitrust panel, said at a hearing. Klobuchar is

sponsor of a bill that would limit arrangements in which brand drugmakers compensate generics for waiting before they enter the market. These types of settlements are called pay-for-delay deals.

- **Bloomberg Government: Biden to Tap Former West Virginia Health Official as Drug Czar:** Biden is nominating Rahul Gupta for director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, according to a White House official speaking on condition of anonymity and two others close to discussions. Gupta is a primary care physician who currently serves as the chief medical and health officer at the March of Dimes. He previously was the health commissioner of West Virginia under two governors.
- **Stat: Judge Rules Insulin Makers And PBMs Must Face Racketeering Claims:** A federal judge dropped allegations that three drug makers engaged in antitrust practices by scheming to overcharge for insulin, but the companies will continue to face racketeering claims in a lawsuit brought by pharmaceutical wholesalers. In the lawsuit, the insulin makers – Eli Lilly (LLY), Sanofi (SNY), and Novo Nordisk (NVO) – were accused of inflating prices by paying kickbacks in the form of rebates and various administrative fees to pharmacy benefit managers in exchange for favorable placement on formularies. These are lists of medicines for which coverage is provided by health insurers that hire PBMs to negotiate on their behalf.