

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, July 2, 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 host the Los Angeles Dodgers at the White House today for a ceremony celebrating their 2020 World Series victory.
- The president will greet members of the team in a ceremony at 11:40 a.m. in the East Room, the White House said. Vice President Kamala Harris – who previously represented California in the Senate, and whose husband, Doug Emhoff, is a Dodgers fan – will also be there, Justin Sink reports.
- Before the meeting, Biden will speak at 10:15 a.m. on the month jobs report. A 711,000 increase in payrolls is forecast for the month, based on the median estimate in a Bloomberg survey of economists, Olivia Rockeman and Vince Golle report.
- Biden at 2:30 p.m. will participate in a naturalization ceremony to welcome U.S. citizens ahead of Independence Day.
- The president and First Lady Jill Biden will speak at 5 p.m. to the National Education Association's annual meeting and representative assembly at Washington's Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

CONGRESS:

- No agenda today.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The Washington Post: House Passes \$760 Billion Transportation And Water Bill, Making Its Pitch On Infrastructure:** The House passed a roughly \$760 billion transportation and water infrastructure bill Thursday, a measure that stakes out the chamber's position in a debate over how to rebuild the nation's roads, transit networks, water pipes and sewers. The package provides \$343 billion for roads, bridges and safety programs, \$109 billion for transit agencies and \$95 billion for rail. It also includes \$117 billion for drinking water programs and \$51 billion for wastewater infrastructure. Amendments adopted over two days of debate added at least \$44 billion to the bill's price tag, mostly to support the adoption of electric vehicles.
- **Bloomberg Government: Dialysis Centers to See Slim Boost in Medicare Payments:** Medicare payments to freestanding dialysis centers will increase 1.2% in 2022, while hospital-

based facilities will see a 1.3% payment bump, according to a proposed payment rule from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Collectively, the pay hikes will add about \$140 million to Medicare's total dialysis expenditures, the CMS estimates.

- **Bloomberg Government: First Rule on 'Surprise' Billing Lays Out How Hospitals Get Paid:** The first regulation to implement a law that prohibits hospitals and doctors from billing sending patients high bills in emergencies and other situations was released yesterday by the Biden administration. The interim final rule specifies how rates will be calculated to determine what providers should be paid.
 - The No Surprises Act, passed as part of appropriations legislation (Public Law 116-260) in December 2020, bars health providers from billing patients more than would be paid for in-network services in emergencies or other circumstances when out-of-network clinicians are used.
- **Modern Healthcare: FTC Antitrust Probes Eye Hospitals, PBMs And Drug Companies:** The Federal Trade Commission is focusing its antitrust sights on the healthcare industry, primarily hospitals, drug companies and pharmacy benefit managers. The agency on Thursday voted to prioritize investigations into healthcare, tech and digital platforms over the next decade and authorized the use of subpoenas and other "compulsory" methods to obtain information. No further details were announced about specific companies it would investigate.
- **Bloomberg Government: Drug Pricing Group Drops Ads Targeting Bennet:** Patients for Affordable Drugs Now, an advocacy group pushing for permitting Medicare to negotiate drug prices, announced it's pulling ads in Colorado meant to pressure Sen. Michael Bennet (D) to support legislation in the Finance Committee. The group said it spoke with Bennet's office and "clarified his position on drug price legislation." It is still playing ads against three others on the panel: Sens. Bob Casey (D-Pa.), Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), and Tom Carper (D-Del.).
- **Modern Healthcare: As Nurses Strike, U.S. Lawmakers Demand Details Into Tenet's COVID-19 Grants:** Four Massachusetts Democratic lawmakers are demanding that Tenet Healthcare disclose how it spent COVID-19 relief funds, accusing the health system of enriching its executives and shareholders instead of supporting its providers and communities. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Sen. Edward Markey, Rep. Jim McGovern and Rep. Lori Trahan blast the company for accepting federal money while shortchanging its workers, including nurses at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts, who currently are on strike.
- **Stat: Old Medicare Rules Threaten Access To Home Medical Equipment:** Pandemic-related breaks in global supply chains for drugs and essential medical supplies are affecting the more than 4.5 million people who receive health care at home and the companies they count on to provide and service their oxygen machines, wheelchairs, hospital-style beds, prosthetic devices, and other durable home medical equipment. Compounding the crisis are federal rules that have long underpaid companies providing home medical equipment and that are now forcing them to swallow the pandemic-related cost increases they're facing. If those rules don't change, countless people could lose access to home care.