

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, July 23, 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 heads across the Potomac River to Lubber Run Park in Arlington, Va., this evening for a campaign event at 7:45 p.m. for Democratic gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe. After the event, Biden will depart to Wilmington, Del., for the weekend.

CONGRESS:

- Out of Session

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Virtual Hearings Likely to Outlast the Pandemic:** The virtual congressional hearing, born of necessity during the height of the pandemic, is likely to become a permanent fixture on Capitol Hill, with leaders saying it allows them to solicit views from a more diverse and broader array of people. “It allows for us to get better, more qualified witnesses because they don’t have to travel,” said Small Business Chair Nydia Velázquez (D-N.Y.) in an interview. “It really is an added benefit to the work we need to do in the committee.” Testifying in person was previously reserved for those either living in D.C. or able to take the time off of work to hop a last-minute flight. Details of how virtual hearings would function in a post-pandemic Congress have yet to be worked out, though lawmakers are now discussing the telehearing format.
- **The Wall Street Journal: Bill Would Strip Social Media Of Protections For Health Misinformation:** Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D., Minn.) introduced a bill Thursday that would strip online platforms such as Facebook Inc. and Twitter Inc. of their liability protections if their technologies spread misinformation related to public-health emergencies, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The bill, which Ms. Klobuchar previously telegraphed was in the works, would create an exception to the law known as Section 230, which shields internet platforms from lawsuits for content generated by their users and other third parties.
- **Axios: Americans' Medical Debt Reached About \$140 Billion In 2020:** Americans' medical debt added up to about \$140 billion last year, according to new research published Tuesday in JAMA. Americans owe debt collectors more medical debt than any other source of debt. Looking at 10% of all credit reports from credit rating agency TransUnion, researchers said they found nearly one in five Americans had medical debt in collections in June 2020.

- **CNN: Prescription Drugs Are Too Expensive For Many Americans. These Companies Are Trying To Change That:** It's an experience millions of Americans have had: you go to the doctor, get a prescription, take it to the pharmacy and get hit with a staggering bill, sometimes running into hundreds of dollars even if insurance covers a part of the cost. "In the US, we're unique in letting drug companies basically set their own prices," Andrew Mulcahy, a senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation who focuses on prescription drugs, told CNN Business. Americans spend around \$1,200 a year on average for prescription drugs – more than any other country – according to the latest available OECD data.
- **Bloomberg Government: Lawmakers Want Details on FDA Inspections During Pandemic:** Top members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee sent a bipartisan letter to the Food and Drug Administration asking for additional information about the impact Covid-19 has “had on inspections of drug manufacturing facilities,” and what actions the agency has taken, or plans to take, “to mitigate experienced and potential future delays of drug approval decisions.”