American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Thursday, July 29, 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 speak at 4 p.m. about new steps to boost Covid-19 vaccinations.

CONGRESS:

- The House is scheduled to vote on a seven-bill minibus appropriations package.
- The Senate plans to resume consideration of a bipartisan infrastructure package.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Stat: FDA Approves The First Interchangeable Biosimilar Insulin:** In a long-awaited move, the Food and Drug Administration has approved the first so-called interchangeable biosimilar version of insulin, which the agency suggested may reduce the price of a life-saving treatment that has been a poster child for the high cost of medicines. The agency endorsed Semglee, a copy of long-acting Lantus (insulin glargine), that it first approved last year. Now, though, the copycat version has also been designated as interchangeable, a regulatory term that means Semglee can be substituted at the pharmacy for Lantus in the same way that generic drugs are substituted for equivalent brand-name medicines.

- **Bloomberg Government: Senate Judiciary Markup:** The Senate Judiciary Committee is scheduled to mark up several bills today, including:
  - S. 1425, to enable the Federal Trade Commission to deter filing of sham citizen petitions to cover an attempt to interfere with approval of a competing generic drug or biosimilar;
  - S. 1428, to prohibit brand name drug companies from compensating generic drug companies to delay the entry of a generic drug into the market; and
  - S. 1388, to require the FTC to study the role of intermediaries in the pharmaceutical supply chain and provide Congress with appropriate policy recommendations.

- **Bloomberg Government: Hospitals and Doctors Win, Pharma Loses in Infrastructure Deal:** Hospital and doctors’ groups successfully lobbied to save Covid relief money earmarked for their members, while pharmaceutical companies are expected to lose billions of dollars as part of the infrastructure deal. The $550 billion infrastructure package negotiated by a bipartisan group of senators would be paid in part by delaying a Trump-era regulation to end some pharmaceutical rebates and refunds from drugmakers for some kinds of physician-administered single-use medicines.
**Bloomberg Government: House Passes Fiscal 2022 Legislative Branch Spending Bill:** The House voted 215-207 yesterday to pass the annual Legislative Branch funding bill, which would support pay raises for staff and interns but block a raise for lawmakers. Before passage, lawmakers adopted amendments to the bill that would: require security officials to provide a report on procedures for evacuating members, staff, workforce, and visitors from the Capitol campus; increase funds by $3.5 million to remove accessibility barriers on the Capitol campus; call for a study on the Capitol switchboard and telephone system in the House to address security risks; and prohibit Capitol Police from enforcing a ban on scooters on Capitol grounds.

**Bloomberg Government: Democrats Want DOD to Pay Less for Drugs:** Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas) called on the defense secretary to use the Pentagon’s authority to lower what it pays for drugs and vaccines that were developed with government money. Operation Warp Speed, supported by the Department of Defense, pushed billions of dollars to spur the creation of several Covid-19 vaccines.