

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, July 9, 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

- 12:30 p.m. – Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki.
- 1:30 p.m. – President delivers remarks and signs an executive order on promoting competition in the American economy.
- 5:15 p.m. – President departs the White House en route to Wilmington, Delaware

CONGRESS:

- Out of Session.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Biden Calls for Efforts to Lower Drug Prices in Exec Order:** Biden will ask his administration to work with states to create a plan to import medicines from Canada, according to the Washington Post, citing people in the administration and others familiar with the executive order, Charles Capel reports. The order will look to increase competition among hospitals and health insurers, in an attempt to make care more affordable. One part of the order will ask the Department of Health and Human Services to create a plan within 45 days to tackle high prescription drug prices.
 - The president's action will prompt the federal government to set new regulations on everything from airline luggage fees to non-compete clauses. He will sign the order after delivering remarks on the American economy, according to a public schedule released by the White House.
- **Bloomberg Government: House Appropriations Markups:** House appropriators will resume marking up the fiscal 2022 Labor-Health and Human Services appropriations bill on Monday. The Labor-HHS subcommittee plans to release its bill on Sunday. The full House Appropriations Committee will mark up the Labor-HHS bills on Thursday.
- **Bloomberg Government: Pelosi Slams Drugmaker Buybacks, Wants Price Cuts in Bill:** Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said yesterday she is pushing to attach drug price cutting legislation to the major budget bill carrying most of Biden's \$4 trillion economic agenda in the coming months. The top Democrat slammed drug companies for the level of stock buybacks and dividends in recent years and argued that cuts to prices will not harm research and development spending given new findings on buybacks.

- The House Democratic bill would allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices, and then force drug companies to lower the prices they charge private insurers or impose huge fines on the companies. Pelosi said she wants it to be part of a special budget bill that can pass the Senate without Republican support since it is immune from the filibuster.
- **CIDRAP: Heart Rate Might Remain Abnormal For 79 Days During Long COVID-19:** For 234 COVID-19 patients, resting heart rates (RHRs) did not return to baseline until a mean of 79 days, reports a JAMA Network Open research letter yesterday. Step counts and sleep duration both took about a month to return to normal. The researchers derived their COVID cohort from the Digital Engagement and Tracking for Early Control and Treatment (DETECT) study and analyzed data from Mar 25, 2020, to Jan 24, 2021. As a comparison, they also looked at 641 participants who had acute respiratory illness but not COVID-19.
- **Modern Healthcare: Devicemaker To Pay Feds \$38M Over Defective Blood Monitoring Strips:** Medical device manufacturer Alere on Thursday agreed to pay the Justice Department \$38.75 million to settle allegations that it knowingly sold defective blood monitoring test strips to Medicare beneficiaries. Alere and its subsidiary Alere San Diego allegedly failed to inform the Food and Drug Administration, patients and providers of issues with its INRatio blood coagulation monitor's test results. Many consumers billed Medicare to purchase the strips, which violates the False Claims Act.
- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Beats Hospitals' Suit Over Medicare Pay Formula:** A group of more than 30 safety-net hospitals lost its challenge to an HHS rule setting out the formula for calculating certain Medicare pay adjustments, as the HHS didn't act arbitrarily in adopting the measure, a federal trial court said. The department properly acknowledged and explained its reasons for changing the policy, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia decided.