

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Friday, August 13, 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 is scheduled at 11:15 a.m. to deliver remarks from the White House on the effect of his economic agenda on drug prices. He's set to depart the White House for Delaware shortly after noon.

CONGRESS:

- Out of Session

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The New York Times: Biden Presses Congress To Act On Prescription Drug Prices:** President Biden implored Congress on Thursday to include strict controls on prescription drug prices in the mammoth social policy bill that Democrats plan to draft this fall, hitting on an issue that his predecessor campaigned on but failed to achieve. Mr. Biden said he wanted at least three measures included in the \$3.5 trillion social policy bill that Democrats hope to pass using budget rules that would protect it from a Republican filibuster. He wants Medicare to be granted the power to negotiate lower drug prices, pharmaceutical companies to face penalties if they raise prices faster than inflation, and a new cap on how much Medicare recipients have to spend on medications.
- **Politico: HHS Mandates Covid-19 Vaccinations For Health Care Workforce:** The Department of Health and Human Services is requiring all of its front-facing health care employees to get vaccinated against Covid-19, making it the second federal department to mandate vaccinations for a portion of its workforce. The policy announced Thursday will apply to more than 25,000 officials under HHS' sprawling umbrella, including staff at the Indian Health Services and National Institutes of Health who operate health and clinical research facilities or could come into contact with patients.
- **Bloomberg Government: ACA Sees Record Numbers as Millions More Seek Coverage:** The Affordable Care Act's six-month special enrollment period will come to a close this weekend after helping drive marketplace coverage to record levels, as the Biden administration continues to scrap Trump-era policies that depressed sign-ups. While final data isn't available, state and federal marketplace enrollment could soon be "peaking" at a record 13 million, said Katie Keith, a researcher at Georgetown University.

- **NPR: FDA Authorizes Third COVID-19 Dose For Immunocompromised People:** The Food and Drug Administration is authorizing an additional dose of a COVID-19 vaccine for certain people with weakened immune systems caused either by disease, medical treatments or organ transplants. The move comes after studies have shown these people may not have sufficient immunity to head off the more serious complications of COVID-19 after the standard vaccine regimen. Late Thursday night, the FDA amended the emergency use authorizations for both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines to allow for an additional dose for certain immunocompromised people, specifically, solid organ transplant recipients or those who are diagnosed with conditions that are considered to have an equivalent level of immunocompromise. The CDC estimates the population to be less than three percent of adults.
- **Bloomberg Government: U.S. Mental Health Under Growing Strain:** It's been almost a year since the U.S. Census Bureau started asking Americans about the mental-health effects of the pandemic, and the latest survey shows just how much worse things have gotten since then. Some 22.3 million Americans recently received counseling or therapy from mental-health professionals, according to new data based on research in the two weeks through Aug. 2. That's a jump of over 5 million, compared to late August last year.