

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Wednesday, August 18, 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

- The White House Covid-19 Response Team and public health officials will give a press briefing at 11 a.m.
- Biden is set to give remarks about coronavirus vaccinations at 4:30 p.m.

CONGRESS:

- Out of Session

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Some Democrats Discuss Adding Refugee Funding to Budget:** Some congressional Democrats are discussing putting money to help resettle Afghan refugees in the \$3.5 trillion tax and spending package currently being drawn up, according to officials familiar with the discussions. The funding would be in addition to the \$1 billion for evacuations, visas and other refugee processing that is part of a supplemental security bill Congress has already passed, but no dollar figure was agreed on.
- **Bloomberg Government: Pelosi Pressures Moderates in Face-Off Over Budget:** Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and her top lieutenants said they will press ahead with votes next week to advance the Senate’s \$3.5 trillion budget blueprint, calling the bluff of a group of moderate Democrats who are demanding the House first pass a separate bipartisan infrastructure package. Hours later, Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.), a leader of that moderate group, signaled he may be open to striking a deal.
 - During a private call with House Democrats earlier yesterday, Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) laid out a schedule for votes on Monday and Tuesday to move ahead on the budget resolution and the \$550 billion infrastructure package – which are central to Biden’s economic agenda – as well as a voting rights measure, according to officials on the call.
 - In a letter to Democratic colleagues yesterday, Pelosi said that Biden has endorsed her plan to pass the budget framework next week, adding that it would “maximize the leverage of our caucus” in the budget process. “While the bipartisan infrastructure bill offers important progress, it is not reflective of the totality of Democrats’ vision” and House Democrats need to assure that they can “deliver” the larger budget package in the Fall, Pelosi wrote.

- Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen termed the Biden administration's two-track push for infrastructure and social programs as "the most important economic project in recent history," countering objections that such bills will amount to "overinvesting." In an opinion piece published by Yahoo, she said the infrastructure bill and budget resolution would help reverse decades of underinvestment in infrastructure, education and childcare.
- **Modern Healthcare: Dignity Health, Anthem Blue Cross Ink New California Contract:** Dignity Health and Anthem Blue Cross of California signed a new contract that will keep more than two dozen Dignity facilities across the Golden State in the insurer's network, the companies announced Monday. Negotiations had stalled between Dignity, which is part of Chicago-based CommonSpirit Health and is the largest hospital provider in California, and Anthem Blue Cross. The dispute affected more than 1 million Anthem commercial PPO, EPO, HMO and POS members, as well as some Medicaid and Medicare Advantage policyholders when the contract expired July 15. The new agreement is retroactive to July 15 and extends to April 30, 2025.
- **Bloomberg Government: Billions From Biden Relief Left Untapped by Money-Flush States:** Tens of billions of dollars that U.S. states got as a lifeline from the Biden administration is sitting idle in local coffers already flush with cash. Officials nationwide are grappling with how to spend an unprecedented infusion, all while their coffers have been replenished by an economic rebound that is generating billions more in revenue than expected. Putting the aid to work was key to several of Biden's goals.
- **Stat: Unvaccinated Deaths Overwhelm Health Workers In Covid Hot Zones:** Bren Ingle watched through a set of twin glass doors as her patient drew his final, halting breaths, a terrifyingly long pause separating each one. She could hear every haunted exhalation he made, a sound halfway between a snore and a scream of pain. It was not her first such vigil. But the knowledge that the patient was unvaccinated made it, somehow, bleaker than the rest.