

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, August 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 is scheduled at 10 a.m. to meet with his national security team about Afghanistan.
- At 3:30 p.m. the White House will host the Seattle Storm, the 2020 WNBA Championship team

CONGRESS:

- Out of Session

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **MedRxiv: Diminishing immune responses against variants of concern in dialysis patients four months after SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccination:** Patients undergoing chronic hemodialysis were among the first to receive SARS-CoV-2 vaccinations due to their increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease and high case fatality rates. To date, there have been minimal longitudinal studies in hemodialysis patients to ascertain whether protection offered by vaccination is long-lasting. To assess how surrogates for protection changed over time, we examined both the humoral and cellular response in a previously reported cohort of at-risk hemodialysis patients and healthy donors, four months after their second dose of Pfizer BNT162b2. Compared to three weeks post-second vaccination, both cellular and humoral responses against the original SARS-CoV-2 isolate as well as variants of concern were significantly reduced, with some dialyzed individuals having no B- or T-cell response. Our data strongly support the need for a third booster in hemodialysis patients and potentially other at-risk individuals.
- **Bloomberg Government: House to Vote on Voting Rights Bill:** The House this week will also vote on legislation that would require federal approval before changes to voting practices could be implemented in states and localities with a recent history of voter discrimination, or if the changes fall into several categories that would be presumed to be discriminatory. The legislation is named for John Lewis, the late civil rights leader and Democratic congressman from Georgia.
- **Axios: U.S. Uninsurance Rate Unchanged During Pandemic Despite Layoffs:** Despite layoffs, losses of income and employer-backed insurance during the pandemic, the uninsurance rate did not change between March 2019 and April 2021 thanks to increased enrollment in public coverage, according to a new report out today by the Urban Institute.

More than one in 10 adults (11%) overall were still uninsured in April 2021, including nearly 20% of adults in states that have not expanded Medicaid.

- **New York Post: Surgeon General Says FDA Vaccine Approval Could Mean More Mandates:** The FDA's expected approval Monday of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine will likely lead to more universities and businesses requiring the immunizations for students and employees, US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said Sunday. Speaking to Chris Wallace on "Fox News Sunday," Murthy declined to confirm the federal Food and Drug Administration's plan to formally OK the vaccine Monday – but said his hope is that a "full approval," as opposed to its current "emergency" one, would push more Americans to get their shots.
- **The Washington Post: Monoclonal Antibodies Are Free And Effective Against Covid-19, But Few People Are Getting Them:** Monoclonal antibodies are free to patients and there have been almost no side effects. They are accessible on an outpatient basis, via a single infusion or four injections. Hospitals, urgent-care centers and even private doctors are authorized to dispense them. But Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, maker of the only authorized, free monoclonal antibodies, said it is reaching fewer than 30 percent of eligible patients, up from fewer than 5 percent a month ago.
- **The New York Times: Why Hospitals And Health Insurers Didn't Want You To See Their Prices:** This year, the federal government ordered hospitals to begin publishing a prized secret: a complete list of the prices they negotiate with private insurers. The insurers' trade association had called the rule unconstitutional and said it would "undermine competitive negotiations." ... But data from the hospitals that have complied hints at why the powerful industries wanted this information to remain hidden. It shows hospitals are charging patients wildly different amounts for the same basic services: procedures as simple as an X-ray or a pregnancy test.