

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, August 6, 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 from the White House at 10:30 a.m. on the July employment report. Today's report is expected to show that the U.S. added about 875,000 in July, the largest gain since August of last year.

### CONGRESS:

- Out of Session

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Modern Healthcare: Cigna, Blue Shield Of California Join Cricket Health's \$83.5M Funding Round:** Kidney care startup Cricket Health raised \$83.5 million in a Series B funding round, including money from two major health insurers, the company announced Thursday. Valtruis, a newly launched portfolio company focused on value-based care launched by private-equity firm Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe this week, led the \$83.5 million funding round. Cigna and Blue Shield of California, two Cricket Health customers, also participated. Cigna was already a Cricket Health investor. Other participants included venture- and growth-equity investment firm Oak HC/FT and K2 HealthVentures, a firm that provides debt and equity capital.
- **Modern Healthcare: Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Would Cut \$8.7B Medicare Provider Pay:** The bipartisan infrastructure bill would lead to a \$8.7 billion reduction in Medicare payments to providers, according to an estimate released Thursday by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. The bill proposes a 4% cut to Medicare payment rates for the first six months of 2031 in part to pay for more than \$500 billion in new spending on roads, bridges, and other surface infrastructure. The extension has been fiercely opposed by hospital groups, who argue Medicare shouldn't be cut to pay for unrelated infrastructure projects.
- **Bloomberg Government: Hospitals Must Track Staff Vaccination Rate:** Hospitals will be required to track and report Covid-19 vaccination status for their health-care personnel to comply with a rule from the Biden administration. The requirement, contained in a wide-ranging hospital payment rule (RIN 0938-AU44, 0938-AU56), is an effort to "support public health tracking and provide patients, beneficiaries, and their caregivers important information to support informed decision making," according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

- **Roll Call: Federal Officials Eye COVID-19 Booster Shots For Immunocompromised:** The Biden administration is working to make COVID-19 vaccine booster shots available to immunocompromised people as quickly as possible, Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said Thursday. The announcement comes a day after the World Health Organization said poorer nations should be prioritized for first shots until September. Fauci, the director of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said during a press briefing that data clearly show that in general, immunocompromised people such as some cancer patients who get vaccinated do not produce an adequate immune response that would protect them against the virus.
- **CBS News: Key Senate Vote On \$1 Trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Expected Saturday:** The Senate debated amendments to the \$1 trillion, 2,700 page bipartisan infrastructure bill late into the night Thursday before Majority Leader Chuck Schumer adjourned the session and said proceedings would resume Saturday. The New York Democrat said there would be a vote to cut off debate on the measure at the beginning of that session. A green light would set the stage for a vote on final passage early next week.
- **Stat: On Covid Relief, Hospitals Find An Unusual Ally In Susan Collins:** The lobbying frenzy began late last month, as senators and the White House desperately sought a way to pay for a high-stakes, high-profile infrastructure deal. One of their options: raiding \$44 billion that had been set aside to help hospitals, nursing homes, and other providers recover from the pandemic, but was never spent. Providers panicked — until Sen. Susan Collins stepped in to save the funds.
- **Bloomberg Government: Senate Bill Seeks to Prepare for 'Disease X':** The U.S. could have vaccines, therapies and other medical countermeasures ready for future disease outbreaks under a Senate bill introduced yesterday. The measure from Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) would provide \$2 billion to the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority over four years, starting in fiscal 2022, to establish a Disease X program aimed at developing responses to unknown disease threats.

  - Currently there are no sustained programs, strategies or funds dedicated to medical countermeasures for previously unidentified diseases. "Infectious disease outbreaks now occur three times more often than they did 40 years ago. The next pandemic, driven by an unknown Disease X, will come," Baldwin said in a statement.