

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, September 10, 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 first heads to Idaho for a briefing at 12:15 p.m. from federal and state fire officials at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise.
- Biden then travels to Sacramento, Calif., where he'll receive a briefing from local, state and federal emergency response personnel at 2:40 p.m. on the effects of recent wildfires.
- Biden will speak from the Sacramento airport at 4:25 p.m. on the administration's response to the wildfires.
- The president will end the day at a campaign rally for California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D), who is facing a recall election. Biden is scheduled to deliver remarks at the rally at 7 p.m.

### CONGRESS:

- House: Committee Work Period
- Senate: 3:00pm - Convene and proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the nomination of James Richard Kvaal, of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary of Education.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Democrats Slim Down Biden's Tax Plan:** House Democrats have drafted a package of tax increases that falls short of Biden's ambition, an acknowledgment of how politically precarious the White House's \$3.5 trillion economic agenda is for party moderates. The House Ways and Means Committee will meet tomorrow to consider the proposals.
  - The Democratic proposal would raise the top corporate tax rate from 21% to 26.5%, less than the 28% Biden had sought, people familiar with the matter said last night. The top rate on capital gains would rise from 20% to 25%, instead of the 39.6% Biden proposed, the people said. The package of proposals, estimated to raise more than \$2 trillion, are slimmed down to appeal to business-minded Democrats, many of whom hail from swing districts. And Democratic leaders, who need the party's full support to push Biden's agenda through Congress, will almost certainly pare them down further in the weeks ahead.

- Bloomberg Government: Moderates Prepare Own Plans:** Moderate Democratic Reps. Scott Peters (D-Calif.) and Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.) introduced their own drug pricing bill Friday. The measure would place a means-tested cap on out-of-pocket costs for drugs for Medicare beneficiaries. The would penalizes manufacturers that raise the price of a drug beyond the inflation rate for drugs in Medicare Part B and D, recouping price increases above inflation going back to 2016. It would also allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices in Part B for products that no longer have exclusivity and for which there is no competition on the market.
- Modern Healthcare: Health Insurance Exchanges To See More Competition, Uncertainty Next Year:** Health insurers are preparing for a volatile 2022, factoring increased competition, regulatory changes and pandemic uncertainty into their bids for the coming enrollment season on the health insurance exchanges. Next year is poised to be the most competitive yet on Affordable Care Act's exchanges since they opened for business in 2013, said Ari Gottlieb, a principal at the consultancy A2 Strategy. At least 11 insurers plan to enter new markets for the 2022 plan year and some current participants are expanding their footprints, according to data compiled by the consumer guide HealthInsurance.org. Exchange customers have had increasingly more carriers from which to choose over the past three years. Last year, just 10% of counties had a single insurer, down from 25% in 2019.
- KHN: Health Care Unions Defending Newsom From Recall Will Want Single-Payer Payback:** Should Gavin Newsom survive the Republican-driven attempt to oust him from office, the Democratic governor will face the prospect of paying back supporters who coalesced behind him. And the leaders of California's single-payer movement will want their due. Publicly, union leaders say they're standing beside Newsom because he has displayed political courage during the covid-19 pandemic by taking actions such as imposing the nation's first statewide stay-at-home order. But behind the scenes, they are aggressively pressuring him to follow through on his 2018 campaign pledge to establish a government-run, single-payer health care system.
- Bloomberg Government: Health Providers Eligible for \$25 Billion in Relief Funds:** Doctors, hospitals, and other health-care providers are eligible for a new release of \$25.5 billion in pandemic assistance, the Health and Human Services Department announced Friday. Of the funds, \$17 billion will go to providers who can show they have lost revenue and expenditures between July 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. Another \$8.5 billion, included in the March \$1.9 trillion pandemic-related stimulus package known as the American Rescue Plan Act, will go to doctors and other health workers who serve rural Medicare and Medicaid patients.

  - “This funding critically helps health care providers who have endured demanding workloads and significant financial strains amidst the pandemic,” HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement. “The funding will be distributed with an eye towards equity, to ensure providers who serve our most vulnerable communities will receive the support they need.”
- Bloomberg Government: Ways and Means Approves Health Elements:** The House Ways and Means Committee on Friday approved by a 24-19 vote it's reconciliation measure to grant vision, hearing and dental benefits to Medicare beneficiaries. Vision coverage is slated to begin in 2022 under the proposal, hearing aides would be covered starting in 2023, and dental coverage would be phased in from 2028-2032. Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.) joined Republicans in voting against the legislation.

- The panel also approved a slate of elder-care measures on Friday. The committee approved elder justice legislation by a 24-18 vote and a nursing home bill by a 24-17 vote. Rep. Murphy was the only Democrat to vote no, joining all Republicans. The quality of nursing home care has come under question since last year, when Covid-19 hit seniors in long-term care facilities the hardest. The virus killed more than 186,000 residents and staff of nursing homes, according to an AARP database.
  - The committee's proposal would open up \$400 million in grants per year for three years to bolster pay for nursing home workers and help long-term care facilities retain staff through student loan repayment or child-care programs. It would also empower the government to reduce payments to nursing homes that lie to authorities about their number of workers to hide understaffed facilities. The package would create ombudsman programs to flag elder abuse and neglect.
- **Bloomberg Government: Five House Races to Watch Now With 2022 Map Unsettled:** Plenty of House races are already on track to be highly competitive even with the 2022 elections more than a year away and a number of variables in flux. Democrats are in a defensive crouch as they brace to maintain control of the chamber, which they hold 220-212 with three vacancies. Their five-seat majority is one of the smallest in history and gives Republicans a decided edge, as the out-of-power party often makes large gains in midterms.
  - **Bloomberg Government: Nine States Set to Determine Senate Control in 2022:** The Senate battleground is taking shape as summer comes to a close, with as many as nine states set to decide which party the 50-50 chamber tips toward in 2022. There are still a number of variables with the potential to shake up the competitive playing field, including the outcome of some crowded primaries and whether Republican Gov. Chris Sununu runs in New Hampshire. But the relatively narrow scope of states — less than 10 out of the 34 holding elections — is unlikely to expand.