Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- Biden is scheduled to depart Delaware at 11 a.m. and return to Washington by noon.
- Shortly before 4 p.m., he’ll leave Washington with plans to arrive in New York by 5 p.m. for a 6:30 p.m. meeting with U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

CONGRESS:

- The House is scheduled to vote on five bills under expedited procedure.
- The Senate plans to vote on two of Biden’s judicial nominations.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Democrats May Slow Infrastructure Plan’s Path:** House Democrats may initially hold off on sending the $550 billion infrastructure bill to the president’s for signature to help keep their party united and his economic agenda on track, House Budget Chair John Yarmuth (D-Ky.) said. Yarmuth suggested the maneuver could be part of Pelosi’s balancing act between centrists, who support the deal, and progressives, who want to tether it to a bigger tax-and-spending plan.
  - Democrats are still planning for a House vote on the infrastructure bill on Sept. 27, though completion of both bills will probably be pushed till early next month, Yarmuth said on Fox News yesterday. “The speaker, if we pass it in the House, does not actually have to send it to the president for signature,” he said. “She can hold on to that bill for a while. So there’s some flexibility in how we mesh the two mandates.”

- **Politico: Sinema Tells White House She’s Opposed To Current Prescription Drug Plan:** The White House has a new headache as it struggles to get its multitrillion-dollar party-line spending bill passed: Sen. Kyrsten Sinema's objections to drug pricing reforms that are already struggling to make it through the House. The Arizona Democrat is opposed to the current prescription drug pricing proposals in both the House and Senate bills, two sources familiar with her thinking said. They added that, at this point, she also doesn’t support a pared-back alternative being pitched by House Democratic centrists that would limit the drugs subject to Medicare negotiation.

- **AP: Democrats Push To Retool Health Care Programs For Millions:** Dental work for seniors on Medicare. An end to sky’s-the-limit pricing on prescription drugs. New options for long-
term care at home. Coverage for low-income people locked out of Medicaid by ideological battles. Those are just some of the changes to health care that Democrats want to achieve with President Joe Biden’s massive “Build Back Better” plan. The $3.5 trillion domestic agenda bill touches almost all aspects of American life, from taxes to climate change, but the health care components are a cornerstone for Democrats, amplified during the COVID-19 crisis.

- **Bloomberg Government: Uncertainty Around U.S. Default Date:** As the federal debt limit brings a disastrous government default ever closer, Congress will turn to the Treasury Department for the one thing it cannot deliver: a precise deadline. House lawmakers this week are scheduled to vote on an increase in the debt ceiling, with no likelihood of passage in the 50-50 Senate assuming Republicans vote en masse against it. That leaves the Treasury on track to run out of cash, as Secretary Janet Yellen has said, “sometime in October.” Given the massive economic and financial disruption that a U.S. payments default would cause, a drop-dead date for the Treasury running out of cash would offer lawmakers -- whether Democrats on their own or in concert with the GOP -- the ultimate prod to action.

- **Bloomberg Government: HHS Extends ACA Open Enrollment by 30 Days:** The 2022 Affordable Care Act marketplace enrollment period will increase from 45 to 75 days this year, and states will have the option to permit people with low incomes to sign up for coverage year-round, the administration said.

- **The Hill: White House Debates Vaccines For Air Travel:** The Biden administration is facing an internal debate over whether to impose vaccine mandates for air travel, with President Biden’s chief medical adviser, Anthony Fauci, saying he would support a mandate but the White House claiming a new policy isn’t forthcoming. The potential of a mandate for domestic air travel would be fiercely opposed by Republicans and the travel industry and could add to the pushback Biden has received over his mandate on COVID-19 vaccines and testing for companies with at least 100 employees.

- **Bloomberg Government: DOJ Targets Health-Care Fraud Involving $1.4 Billion:** The Department of Justice Friday announced criminal charges against 138 defendants, including doctors, nurses, and other licensed medical professionals for their alleged participation in health-care fraud schemes that caused approximately $1.4 billion in losses. Those charges include fraud committed through telemedicine, Covid-19 services, substance abuse treatment facilities, and other illicit opioid distribution schemes across the U.S..