

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Wednesday, September 22,
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

- President Joe Biden will meet in the Oval Office this afternoon with House and Senate Democrats to discuss the party's economic and infrastructure plans.

CONGRESS:

- The House plans to continue voting on amendments to the annual defense policy bill.
- Senators are scheduled to vote on three of Biden's nominees to the Treasury Department, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Axios: Care For Kidney Disease Plummeted In The Pandemic:** The number of patient visits for chronic kidney care plummeted by more than 26% in the early months of the pandemic, according to new data from the nation's largest insurer, UnitedHealth Group. Researchers are racing to understand just how much care people skipped – and whether it actually affected their health.
- **Bloomberg Government: Republican Alternative:** Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) introduced a new stopgap measure that keeps the government funded through Dec. 3 but does not suspend or increase the debt limit. The Senate bill includes funding for disaster aid, assistance for Afghan allies and Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system. The bill "removes the Democrats' ill-conceived language on the debt limit," Shelby said.
- **Politico: House Leadership Looks To Jam Holdouts On Drug Pricing:** Top House Democrats are setting up a showdown vote on drug pricing as early as next week, rolling a leadership-backed plan into the party's sweeping social spending package and daring holdout centrists who previously derailed the plan in committee to vote it down again. Top Democrats think enough of the four – Reps. Scott Peters (D-Calif.), Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.), Rep. Kathleen Rice (D-N.Y.), and Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.) – will cave and back the proposal to allow Medicare to negotiate prices for a wide swath of high-cost drugs rather than risk upending the entire \$3.5 trillion package.

- **Modern Healthcare: CMS To Retool Medicare Advantage To Better Serve Dual-Eligibles:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services plans to retool the Medicare Advantage program to improve the patient experience for people eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, an agency official said during AHIP's National Conference on Medicare, Medicaid and Dual Eligibles Online Tuesday. The agency wants to build on the lessons learned from Medicare-Medicaid Plans participating in its Financial Alignment Initiative by incorporating them into the Medicare Advantage program, said Tim Engelhardt, director of CMS' Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office. CMS could announce the changes as soon as this fall, he said. "It's really time for us to focus on bringing more of the successful elements to greater scale through Medicare Advantage," Engelhardt said. "Stay tuned."
- **Bloomberg Government: FDA Weighing Boosters After CDC Panel Vote:** The Food and Drug Administration is expected to decide as soon as today on a recommendation for Covid-19 booster shots made by Pfizer and BioNTech, two sources familiar with the matter said, the latest step in a process that could open the door to extra shots in the coming days. The agency's decision would tee up consideration by an advisory panel of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which has scheduled a meeting for later today and tomorrow to discuss boosters.

 - An FDA advisory panel on Friday rejected a call for boosters for all adults, instead opting to urge them for a narrower group: people 65 and older, people at risk of severe Covid-19, and people at risk of occupational exposure. The FDA could tweak those parameters.
- **Bloomberg Government: FDA, Drugmakers Agree on Biosimilar User Fees Deal:** Drugmakers could have an easier time getting cheaper, interchangeable biological products across the finish line under a new FDA effort to facilitate their development as part of the next deal on user fees. The Food and Drug Administration released a letter outlining its commitments to industry for the next round of biosimilar user fees for fiscal 2023 through fiscal 2027. User fees paid by drug companies help fund FDA operations.