

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, September 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 has no public events scheduled.

### CONGRESS:

- The House is scheduled to hold final votes on the annual defense policy bill.
- Senators plan to vote on Biden's pick to fill a spot on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The Wall Street Journal: Pfizer Covid-19 Booster Shouldn't Be For Moderna, J&J Vaccine Recipients, Health Official Says:** A federal health official said Wednesday there isn't enough data to support giving a Pfizer Inc. booster dose to people who have received other Covid-19 vaccines. Doran Fink, a deputy director in the Food and Drug Administration's vaccines division, made the remarks at a meeting of a key vaccine advisory panel that would recommend who should get an additional dose of the vaccine from Pfizer and partner BioNTech SE.
- **Modern Healthcare: Pushing For A New Government Agency To Curb Patient Harms:** Efforts to form a national patient safety board would shape how medical errors and other patient harms are handled within the nation's hospitals. A coalition made up of stakeholders ranging from Dartmouth-Hitchcock and the Carilion Clinic to the Purchaser Business Group on Health and the National Quality Forum is pitching Congress on a government agency that would operate similarly to the National Transportation Safety Board, but for health providers. The new entity would focus on solutions to health safety problems and preventing deaths and other harm to patients.
- **Bloomberg Government: Hospitals Concerned About Surprise Billing Networks:** The White House's first rule implementing a landmark 2020 law aimed at protecting patients against costly hospital and doctor bills in emergencies and other situations will lower costs for patients, a group that represents large employers said. But hospitals say they are worried the No Surprises Act's rules won't get at the real problem driving high bills – inadequate health-care networks – and also worry about its Jan. 1 deadline.

- **Stat: Federal Officials Move Closer To Penalizing Drug Makers Over Discounts:** Following a year of controversy, the Health Resources and Services Administration is taking steps to penalize six large drug makers for ending discounts to a federal program that provides medicines to hospitals and clinics serving mostly low-income populations. In a series of letters, the agency notified Eli Lilly (LLY), Sanofi (SNY), AstraZeneca (AZN), Novo Nordisk (NVO), Novartis (NVS), and United Therapeutics that their failure to comply with the 340B drug discount program was referred to the Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees HRSA. If assessed, penalties can total more than \$5,000 per violation.
- **Bloomberg Government: Greater Scrutiny Pushed for Medicare Advantage:** A government watchdog agency is calling for greater oversight of 20 private Medicare Advantage plans that received a disproportionate share of \$9.2 billion in enhanced payments in 2016 that were based on suspicious patient diagnoses. The HHS Office of Inspector General's report follows a similar OIG report last year that called on the Medicare program to tighten oversight of Medicare Advantage payments based on health risk assessments.
- **The New York Times: High Covid Hospitalizations Have Delayed Elective Surgeries:** In chronic pain, Mary O'Donnell can't get around much. At most, she manages to walk for a short time in her kitchen or garden before she has to sit down. "It's just frustrating at this point," said Ms. O'Donnell, 80, who lives in Aloha, Ore. "I'm really depressed." She had been preparing for back surgery scheduled for Aug. 31, hoping the five-hour procedure would allow her to be more active. But a day before the operation, at OHSU Health Hillsboro Medical Center, she learned it had been canceled. "Nope, you can't come, our hospital is filling up," she said she was told.