

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, September 24, 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 host Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a bilateral meeting at the White House at 11 a.m.
- The president at 2 p.m. will host the first in-person Quad Leaders summit with Modi, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide.
- Shortly after 4 p.m. Biden will meet alone with Yoshihide.
- The president is scheduled to depart the White House for Camp David just after 5:30 p.m.
- Biden will meet with the “Quad” leaders as the members plan to unveil a series of initiatives, from semiconductors to vaccines, that they hope can counteract Chinese influence across the Pacific. Yet success will mean navigating the sort of thorny issues that have dogged the informal alliance since its creation following the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean that killed a quarter million people. Now, those issues include the tumultuous U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, complaints about coronavirus vaccine distribution in the developing world and disputes over climate change commitments and 5G technology.

### CONGRESS:

- The House Energy and Commerce Committee is scheduled to hold debate on H.R. 3755, the Women’s Health Protection Act of 2021.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **The Hill: Manchin Fires Warning Shot On Plan To Expand Medicare:** Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) is firing a warning shot at progressives' hopes of using a sweeping social spending bill to expand Medicare, arguing Democrats should first focus on shoring up the program. Manchin, leaving the Capitol after a vote on Thursday, was asked about expanding Medicare to cover hearing, vision and dental, something included in House Democrats' \$3.5 trillion plan and being championed in the Senate by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.).
- **Modern Healthcare: CMS Reevaluating Hospital Outpatient Pay Rate Cut Exemptions:** CMS is reevaluating hospitals' applications for exceptions from reimbursement cuts to their off-campus outpatient facilities following pushback from the industry. In January, CMS rejected more than 60% of the mid-build exceptions, which is designed to preserve higher

payments if hospitals document that their off-campus outpatient departments were under construction when the Bipartisan Budget Act passed in 2015.

- **Stat: Panel Recommends Against Use Of Race In Assessment Of Kidney Function:** An expert task force on Thursday released a new and much-anticipated approach for diagnosing kidney function, saying there is no need for controversial algorithms that consider race in the assessment of kidney disease. The new recommendations come as a victory for a growing number of physicians and activists who argue the use of race-based tools in medicine is outdated and wrong because race is not a good proxy for genetic difference – and sends the message that some races are biologically inferior. Many also argue that the separate racial thresholds for classifying kidney disease underestimate the extent of disease in Black patients, leaving them less likely to receive the speciality kidney care they need or be placed on transplant waitlists.
- **Bloomberg Government: House Panel to Weigh Tax, Spend Plan:** House Democrats have scheduled a rare Saturday panel meeting to advance the proposed \$3.5 trillion tax-and-spending package. House Budget Committee Chair John Yarmuth said he expects the full House to consider the package next week.
  - The committee vote on the individual components of the tax and spending bill is a necessary step but does not mean Democrats have resolved all their differences. The panel cannot amend what the other committees voted to approve earlier this month: any changes would come at the Rules Committee or on the House floor. If the House votes on it next week, it could put moderates in a difficult spot, forcing their vote on a bill the Senate will likely amend and send back.
  - As part of the plan's revenue mechanism, Democrats reached a deal to narrow the measure to require financial institutions to report account flows to the IRS in a bid to improve tax compliance, according to a key House Democrat. House Ways and Means Chair Richard Neal (D-Mass.) said he and other Democratic leaders are planning to set a threshold higher than the \$600 proposed by Biden to trigger a bank to report its total account inflows and outflows.
- **Genomeweb: Geisinger To Expand Precision Medicine Research Under NIH Grant:** The National Institutes of Health will renew three awards totaling \$73.2 million over the next five years to expand a precision medicine effort at several large systems and medical schools. Five institutions and principal investigators will receive the awards: Christa Martin and Erin Riggs at Geisinger Health System, Jonathan Berg at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Sharon Plon and Aleks Milosavljevic at Baylor College of Medicine, Teri Klein at Stanford University, and the Broad Institute's Heidi Rehm.
- **Reuters: CDC Director Breaks With Panel, Backs COVID-19 Boosters For High-Risk Workers:** The move comes after an advisory panel to the agency on Thursday did not recommend that people in high-risk jobs, such as teachers, and risky living conditions should get boosters. The panel had recommended boosters for elderly and some people with underlying medical conditions. CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said her agency had to make recommendations based on complex, often imperfect data. "In a pandemic, even with uncertainty, we must take actions that we anticipate will do the greatest good," she said in a statement.

- **Bloomberg Government: Manchin's Reconciliation Questions:** Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) said yesterday he doesn't support expanding Medicare benefits without first addressing the program's long-term solvency, again putting him at odds with Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and other key liberals as they negotiate President Joe Biden's economic agenda. Asked about Democrats' plans to expand benefits for dental, vision and hearing in the upcoming budget reconciliation bill, Manchin pointed to the program's long-term financial problems instead.
- **Bloomberg Government: House Defies Biden's Defense Budget With \$25 Billion Boost:** House Democrats banded with Republicans to back a boost to the Pentagon's budget, rejecting Biden's recommended \$715 billion amid concerns about countering an emerging China. The House yesterday passed 316-113 the fiscal 2022 defense policy bill, which would authorize the Pentagon to spend \$740 billion, an increase of \$25 billion from the administration's request.
  - One of the House-passed amendments includes language for the Homeland Security Department to make broad efforts to tackle low morale in its workforce and strengthen its cybersecurity programs. The amendment from Reps. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) and John Katko (R-N.Y.) came as the department consistently ranks at the bottom of federal workplace rankings since its creation following the Sept. 11 attacks.
  - Earlier, Democrats fell short in their effort to slash the Pentagon's budget authorization, laying bare the reality of the party's narrow majority – they need GOP votes to pass national security legislation. Progressives offered two amendments – one to slash more than \$70 billion from the Pentagon's authorization and one to cut about \$24 billion. They were handily defeated as Democrats joined with Republicans to vote against them.
- **Bloomberg Government: Grassley Announces 2022 Run:** Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), 88, said this morning he will seek another term as a Senator next year. "I'm running for re-election – a lot more to do, for Iowa. We ask and will work for your support," he said in a tweet.