

# American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Monday, November 29, 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 receive a briefing at 10 a.m. from members of the White House Covid-19 response team on the Omicron variant. He will deliver remarks on the variant from the White House at 11:45 a.m.
- The president plans to meet with the CEOs of several companies at 2 p.m. to discuss the supply chain. He'll speak on the topic at 3:45 p.m.

### CONGRESS:

- The Senate returns today to continue work on the annual, must-pass defense policy measure.
- The House returns tomorrow.

## Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Bloomberg Government: Democrats Push for Post-Pandemic Insurance Coverage:** A rewrite of Medicaid rules included in House Democrats' spending and tax package would make safety-net programs in red states look closer to their blue-state counterparts. This \$270 billion expansion of public health insurance programs for poorer and disabled Americans – which accounts for more than 80% of the health care-related spending in Democrats' package – carries measures to stop states from tightening restrictions on their Medicaid programs when the White House declares an end to the health emergency.
  - Those changes would forestall a sudden drop in coverage for millions of Americans when the federal government's contributions to state Medicaid programs return to pre-pandemic levels. They're aimed at people who see increases to their income that might disqualify them from Medicaid in several states but aren't enough to afford many private plans. "These are all incredible changes to our health care system that will save lives," Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-N.J.), chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, told reporters recently.
- **Modern Healthcare: Supreme Court To Hear 340B Case That Could Impact All Hospitals:** The Supreme Court will hear arguments in a case seeking to reverse cuts to the 340B Drug Program next week, and the outcome could have consequences for all providers, even those who don't access the discounted medicines. Plaintiffs including the American Hospital Association and providers that participate in the program are asking the high court to reverse a nearly 30% cut in 340B reimbursements the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

initiated during President Donald Trump's administration and continued under President Joe Biden. Oral arguments are scheduled for Nov. 30.

- **Bloomberg Government: Drug, Insulin Price Caps Head for Showdown:** Senate Democrats expect to defend key portions of their drug-pricing agenda against a technical challenge by Republicans as soon as this week, potentially curtailing key parts of the social spending package. Democrats expect to go before the Senate's parliamentarian – a nonpartisan official who oversees that chamber's rules – early next month to get guidance on whether many of the health policy items qualify under the budget reconciliation process, two senior Democratic aides told Bloomberg Government.
  - Two aides and one health industry lobbyist familiar with the discussions say three major drug-pricing proposals are most in peril of failing to qualify – caps on drug-price increases, new transparency requirements for pharmaceutical industry middlemen, and a \$35 per-month cap on insulin. These items are expected to face challenges because they would make changes to private insurance plans, according to sources familiar with the discussions.
- **The Washington Post: Some Organ Donors And Recipients Are Fighting Vaccination Requirements:** When hospital officials canceled his kidney transplant, Mike Ganim's surgery date was just five days away. He had already undergone a preoperative appointment and taken medical leave from work for the long-awaited, lifesaving operation. His close-knit family had created videos for him and for the woman who was giving him her kidney, stitching together tearful well-wishes and thank-yous from dozens of loved ones. But on Oct. 8, the Cleveland Clinic phoned Ganim to say a newly enacted policy required organ transplant donors and recipients be vaccinated against the coronavirus. The Eastlake, Ohio, man had gotten the vaccine – as a transplant patient, he is at risk of developing severe covid-19. But his donor hadn't. Although she was willing to give up an organ, she did not want to get the shot.
- **The Hill: Biden To Provide Update Monday On US Response To Omicron Variant:** President Biden will provide an update on his administration's response to the new COVID-19 omicron variant on Monday, according to the White House, after Dr. Anthony Fauci said it will take roughly two weeks to gather more information on the new strain. Biden met with Fauci and members of the White House COVID-19 Response Team on Sunday, two days after the World Health Organization (WHO) held an emergency meeting to discuss the new COVID-19 strain, which it labeled a variant of concern.
- **The New York Times: A Cure For Type 1 Diabetes? For One Man, It Seems To Have Worked:** Brian Shelton's life was ruled by Type 1 diabetes. When his blood sugar plummeted, he would lose consciousness without warning. He crashed his motorcycle into a wall. He passed out in a customer's yard while delivering mail. Following that episode, his supervisor told him to retire, after a quarter century in the Postal Service. He was 57. His ex-wife, Cindy Shelton, took him into her home in Elyria, Ohio. "I was afraid to leave him alone all day," she said. Early this year, she spotted a call for people with Type 1 diabetes to participate in a clinical trial by Vertex Pharmaceuticals. The company was testing a treatment developed over decades by a scientist who vowed to find a cure after his baby son and then his teenage daughter got the devastating disease.

- **Bloomberg Government: House Panel to Explore Fentanyl Crisis:** Energy and Commerce Chair Pallone and Health Subcommittee Chair Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) announced last week that the subcommittee will hold a hearing on Dec. 2 to examine the federal response to combat “illicit fentanyl-related substances.” The subcommittee will hear from public health and law enforcement officials for the Biden White House “as we consider the interagency proposal to regulate fentanyl-related substances,” the lawmakers said in a statement.