

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Bush Budget Leaves Doctors Out In The Cold, ACP Warns

President Bush's 2008 budget proposed \$70 billion in cuts to Medicare spending. Though he didn't propose any new cuts to physician payments, he also didn't suggest any ways to avoid the roughly 8- to 10-percent pay cut facing your office next year.

The president's failure to include funds in the budget to avert this cut will -accelerate the collapse of primary care, create access problems, and manufacture obstacles to fundamental reform of physician payment policies,- said the **American College of Physicians**. The ACP disagreed with Bush's plans to cut the **Children's Health Insurance Program**, but did applaud an \$11-million pay boost to the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**.

Speaking to reporters, acting **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** Administrator **Leslie Norwalk** said CMS will be discussing ways to avoid next year's cut with Congress and the medical community. -Clearly it's not an inexpensive fix,- she noted. She predicted -lively- discussion on this issue in the coming year.