

## Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

### MEDICARE REFORM: AWP Cuts, Redistribution Not Dead Yet

Rural physicians can cling to hope of relief on Medicare payment levels, while oncologists and equipment suppliers can gird for another battle around the corner.

"I am very disappointed that my amendment, which had 86 votes in the Senate, addressing Medicare rural equity was not included in this agreement," Sen. **Charles Grassley** (R-Iowa) told the conference committee May 22. "President Bush also weighed in strongly supporting my efforts in the context of a Medicare bill," he said. That bill will come up for consideration in early June, he added.

With the president's support and strong backing in Congress, "I'm encouraged that we'll succeed before the end of the summer," Grassley said.

Providers had better hope that Grassley's amendment undergoes some amendment of its own before it comes up for a vote. It definitely creates winners and losers in the Medicare program.