

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Physician Note: With Election Over, All Eyes Turn to Medicare Cuts

Plus: Prepare now for supply concerns from diabetic patients.

With the election over, providers' eyes are turning to Washington, D.C. to see how lawmakers resolve the so-called "fiscal cliff" budget problems, which include the two percent across-the-board sequestration cuts set to hit Medicare providers' payment rates in early 2013.

Certain healthcare provider groups fear becoming targets for lawmakers to raise funds to head off the cuts in other areas. For example, hospital industry reps are already lobbying very publicly against another round of cuts to their rates.

Physicians also will be seeking funding from Congress, since they face a newly finalized 2013 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule that includes a 26.5 percent cut. "In the absence of Congressional action, an overall reduction of 26.5 percent will be imposed ... on or after January 1, 2013," says the fee schedule slated for publication in the Nov. 16 Federal Register.

How health care matters get handled in Congress may change, now that a veteran politician with a healthcare focus has been defeated. Eighty-year-old House Ways and Means health Subcommittee chair **Pete Stark** (D-Calif.) was defeated by a 31-year-old challenger from his own party. Stark, for whom the "Stark Law" is named, is leaving after 40 years in Congress.