

## **Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert**

### **PHYSICIAN NOTES: Congress Mulls Extending Temporary Conversion Factor Pay Fix Through the Autumn**

Plus: CMS creates a downloadable booklet that can help you navigate the waters of the NPI system.

Practices that were looking for a permanent change to the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula before March 1 may come up empty-handed. However, Congress appears to be planning to offer an extension of the pay cuts that you're due to face after Feb. 28.

Despite CMS's plans to downgrade your 2010 conversion factor by 21.29 percent, the government stepped in at the last minute and offered you a quick boost in December, when Congress voted to delay a decrease to the conversion factor until March 1. Therefore, you're facing a conversion factor of \$36.0846 for dates of service between Jan. 1, 2010 and Feb. 28, 2010.

The temporary fix was described by many as a way to keep physician pay stable while a more permanent fix was devised. However, it does not appear that Congress is ready to adjust the SGR process.

In the meantime, government sources have indicated that the temporary conversion factor freeze at \$36.0846 may be extended through this coming fall. Congress has added a provision to legislation that was written to create new jobs which would extend the conversion factor freeze through Sept. 30. Because a snowstorm has shut down most government offices, no official word has come down from Washington indicating when the jobs bill (and this new provision) will be introduced on the House or Senate floor, but keep an eye on the Insider for future developments.