

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

PHYSICIAN NOTES: New Health Care Legislation May Be A Boon to Some Practices, But Fails to Address SGR Formula

Plus: New Jersey hospital faces over \$6 million in settlement charges after allegations of inflating charges.

If you were waiting for the health care reform law to bring sweeping changes to the way your Medicare payments are calculated, you'll have to keep waiting.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which **President Obama** signed on March 23, includes sweeping changes to the U.S. health care system, but does not change the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula or extend the Medicare pay freeze, which is currently set to expire on March 31.

Although primary care physicians and mental health practitioners will most likely see a Medicare payment boost from the new health care legislation, some practices were hoping that a permanent change to the SGR would also be included in it.

Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) introduced an amendment to the reconciliation bill on March 24 that would extend the current Medicare physician reimbursement formula for three years, according to a March 24 news release on Gregg's Web site. Funding for the three-year extension would come from savings found in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Gregg noted.

Keep an eye on the Insider for more on whether Gregg's amendment is adopted, and how the health care legislation will affect Part B practices.