

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

PHYSICIAN NOTES: Senate Could Vote on 18-Month Pay Increase by Next Month

But physician pay boosts could result in cuts to other providers

Most physicians don't want to wait until June 30 to arrive before they know whether they'll be saved from the 10.8 percent pay cut that's due to hit Medicare providers on July 1. Hopefully the promising news that came from Capitol Hill this week is an indication that lawmakers don't want to wait that long, either.

On April 8, **Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.)**, who chairs the **Senate Finance Committee**, indicated that the Senate would vote on Medicare funding increases by mid-May. Although many non-physician groups are worried that boosts to physician pay would cut payments to other Medicare providers, no one knows for sure just how legislators would fund the potential physician payment increases.

Stay tuned to the Insider for more information on potential changes that could be coming down the pike.

In other news-

If you were hoping for new HCPCS codes to cure your coding woes next quarter, CMS dashes your dreams with the new code update.

The HCPCS quarterly update, which announces revisions, deletions and additions to HCPCS codes and modifiers, only introduces one change effective July 1.

You'll be able to report new modifier CG (Policy criteria applied) in July, which features a -C- coverage code, which stands for -Carrier judgment.-

CMS will be bringing dialysis centers into the 21st Century with new minimum standards that dialysis facilities must meet to attain Medicare certification. The new standards, outlined in a final rule that was published in the April 4 Federal Register, focus mainly on improving patients' quality of care in dialysis settings.

-Facilities must work with patients to achieve and maintain the best possible outcomes of care,- said **Barry M. Straube, MD, CMS-** chief medical officer and director of the CMS Office of Clinical Standards & Quality, in a statement.

To read the final rule, visit www.cms.hhs.gov/CFCsAndCoPs/downloads/ESRDdisplayfinalrule.pdf.