

## Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

### PHYSICIAN NOTES: Senate Votes to Delay Medicare Pay Freeze Until October -- But It's Not Final Yet

**Plus: CMS offers new products to help you make sense out of how to maximize your PQRI bonus for 2010.**

If a new bill -- already approved by the Senate -- moves forward, you could have another six months before the 21.2 percent pay cut kicks in. On May 10, the Senate approved the American Workers, State, and Business Relief Act of 2010 (HR 4213), which includes an extension of the freeze on the current conversion factor through Oct. 1. Currently, the conversion factor will rise by 21.2 percent on April 1.

Although no one wants to see payments diminish next month, physician advocacy organizations still aim for a more permanent fix to the payment formula rather than repeated last-minute votes to freeze the conversion factor year after year. "Physicians cannot keep their practice doors open to all Medicare patients without clear direction from Congress on Medicare payment rates," said **J. James Rohack, MD**, president of the AMA, in a March 10 statement.

"Short-term actions are the wrong answer to a long-term problem," Rohack said. "These band-aid fixes have only served to increase the size of the cuts and the cost of reform. The longer Congress delays, the higher the cost to the American taxpayer. It's time to fix the formula and ensure that seniors can count on Medicare now and for years to come."

The bill must return to the House before it can become a law. Keep an eye on the Insider for updates. To read the bill, visit [www.opencongress.org/bill/111-h4213/text](http://www.opencongress.org/bill/111-h4213/text).