

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Physician Updates Could Vary By Region, Specialty

If the **Medicare Payments Advisory Commission** got its way, you would be receiving a 2.7-percent increase for 2006 instead of a freeze. And now MedPAC is telling Congress you deserve a 2.8-percent increase for 2007 as well. This recommendation will appear in MedPAC's March report to Congress.

But in MedPAC's January meeting, analysts also considered replacing the current system of physician payment updates with one that treats physicians differently depending on a variety of factors. Some physicians spend more Medicare money than others, depending on their region or their types of patients. Congress is asking MedPAC to come up with new ways to control physician spending, and one popular approach is to target the formula based on region or types of patients.

Separately, MedPAC told Congress it couldn't really tell whether drug cuts affected the quality of chemotherapy services, and couldn't find any signs that patients were having trouble accessing chemotherapy.