

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Steep Imaging Cuts Could Be Delayed By 2 Years

Imaging scans such as CT angiography to examine heart arteries or PET/CT exams to pinpoint a tumor location could face cuts of around 50 percent next year, the **American College of Radiology** warned in a July 18 hearing of the **House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee**.

Next year, CMS has proposed cutting imaging services to outpatient payment levels, paying only 50 percent for a second scan on a contiguous body part, and restricting -self-referrals- when a physician owns off-site imaging equipment.

Rep. **Joseph Pitts** (R-PA) has introduced HR 5704, the -Access to Medicare Imaging Act of 2006,- which would delay the imaging cuts for two years. The bill has 43 co-sponsors, including 15 members of the Health Subcommittee. At the hearing, subcommittee members talked about using standards, quality measures and pay-for-performance to reduce imaging costs instead of imposing cuts.