

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

TO PARTICIPATE OR NOT?

It makes sense for the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** to do things to encourage providers to stay participating, consultant **Quin Buechner** says. It gives CMS "political talking points" to cite a high participation rate. But Buechner believes that physicians are starting to become more "feisty," in part because they've sharpened their self-defense skills in battles with managed-care plans.

"It'll be interesting to see how many people participate this year," Buechner says. If the participation rate drops a lot, it may signal "a significant rebellion on the part of the physicians to being jerked around by Medicare."

Whether physicians elect participation depends on the local attitudes, says **Fred Wolfe, CPA**, with **Hayflich and Steinberg** in Huntington, W.Va. "West Virginia has an aging population, and we don't think too much of people who alienate our senior citizens."