

## Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

### White House Supports Physician Pay Increase

Many observers have worried that the Bush Administration would throw up roadblocks in the way of rescuing physicians from the 4.4 percent cut scheduled for January. But **Mark McClellan**, administrator of the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**, told Congress that the White House backs a fix to the 2006 and 2007 payments.

At a hearing of the **House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee**, McClellan said the White House would support a \$20 billion fix to your payments--but only if it comes with a pay for performance (P4P) program that rewards doctors for efficiency. The White House has threatened to veto any budget that removes a "stabilization fund" for managed care organizations. The Senate uses the removal of that fund to pay for physician pay increases, so Congress may have to find money elsewhere to rescue you from steep cuts.

The House passed its budget package by only two votes on Nov. 18. The House and Senate are expected to begin conference proceedings on the competing budget bills in mid-December.