

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: Sequestration Cuts Still Loom Large After Enactment Of Budget Bill

Telehealth PHE waivers extended.

Recently enacted legislation has funded the federal government through the end of the fiscal year, to the tune of \$1.5 trillion. But relief from Medicare and PAYGO sequestration isn't in it.

Reminder: A 2 percent Medicare sequestration pay cut and a 4 percent Pay-As-You-Go sequestration cut were set to hit Medicare providers Jan. 1, but an eleventh-hour law delayed the cuts for just a little while. The 2 percent cut got bumped to a 1 percent cut starting April 1 and back to a 2 percent cut starting June 1. The 4 percent PAYGO cut was delayed until January 2023, at least.



In the runup to the passage of the omnibus budget bill, which President **Biden** signed into law on March 15, providers and their representatives implored legislators to provide relief from the sequestration cuts, but to no avail - at least thus far. Agencies and lobbyists hope to secure sequestration cut relief in upcoming legislation, they say.

The bill did include the extension of waivers for telehealth services under the COVID-19 public health emergency, specifically mentioning hospice face-to-face visits. The extension stretches to 151 days past the end of the PHE, notes McGuireWoods Consulting in online analysis of the budget package.

"The omnibus' extension of telehealth waivers for five months after the COVID-19 emergency ends can help to ensure quality of life for millions of older adults," says LeadingAge CEO **Katie Smith Sloan** in a statement. "Telehealth, as we've seen throughout the pandemic, can mean the difference between life and death, particularly for older adults."