

How Capitol Hill Impacts Your Practice



No Disclosures to Report



Budget Update

Deadline was set for January 19 & February 2 – splitting up funding in two groups.

Congressional leaders passed a CR on Thursday, January 18, with a two-tiered stopgap into March (passed on mostly Democratic support)

Funding for some federal agencies would expire March 1, while funding for others would run through March 8.

Since 1996, Congress has never passed more than five of the dozen annual funding bills by the Oct. 1 start of the fiscal year, Pew Research Center notes.

Where Things Stand – and a Game of Finger Pointing

3.37% conversion factor reduction.

Both Senate Finance and House E&C have agreed on a 1.25% increase to the 2024 Medicare physician payment conversion factor.

Hearing that Senate Dems are “balking” but also know that Freedom Caucus members aren’t helping either (want anti-abortion riders).

My “guess” on what’s gonna happen ...

Won’t go to Government Shutdown

Will aim for “longer-term” CR through after the election



Larry Bucshon, MD
@RepLarryBucshon

I guess Obamacare DiSH payment cuts to hospitals is delayed in the CR but the CMS 3.37% conversion factor cuts to doctors is not. Another slap in the face to our nation’s providers. It is shameful that Congress is allowing this to happen. I’m a NO on the CR if it isn’t fixed.

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Short-term vs. Long-term Medicare Fix

An inflationary update to the MPFS (H.R. 2474, 78 co-sponsors)

Tweaks to the application of budget neutrality to reduce impact of large swings in the fee schedule (H.R. 6545, 14 co-sponsors)

H.R. 6683, the Preserving Seniors' Access to Physicians Act of 2023, calls for increase payments under the Medicare physician fee schedule for 2024 by 4.62% (42 co-sponsors, 33 of which are GOP)

Physician Workforce

Physician Shortage Reduction Act (H.R. 2389/S. 1302) would expand the number of Medicare Medicare-supported medical residency positions by 14,000 over seven years.

Specialty Physicians Advancing Rural Care (SPARC) Act (S. 705/ H.R. 2761) establishes a new loan repayment program for specialty physicians; a portion of eligible student loans would be repaid by the federal government in exchange for practicing in a rural community experiencing a shortage of specialty medicine physicians.

No Surprises Act (NSA) Implementation

Support:

Addresses the failure of payers to communicate IDR eligibility information with payment remittance, financial accessibility of IDR for radiology practices, open negotiation communication issues, cooling off period concerns and IDR entity selection issues.

The rule also includes a proposal to reduce the administrative fee for low-dollar claim disputes.

Still Needs Improvement:

Enforcement mechanisms for payers who do not comply with the statute and regulations.

Limiting batching to 25 line items in a single dispute.

Proposed reduced administrative fee for low-dollar claims of 50% of the full administrative fee is too high and recommend a reduced administrative fee of no more than \$50.

PAMA AUC

November 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule paused implementation of the PAMA AUC program.

CMS fully supports program despite administrative hurdles, signifying need for Congressional intervention.

CMS did recognize the value of the AUC program to improve utilization patterns for Medicare beneficiaries.

CMS states that implementation of AUC could result in potential savings to the Medicare program of \$700,000,000 annually.

A Moran Company Congressional Budget Office (CBO) modeled calculation of ACR's amended AUC legislative language estimated a savings of \$2 billion over 10 years.

Political Environment

- **Presidential Year**
- **Uncertainty in Leadership of Both Parties**
- **Retirements (22 Ds/17 Rs in House & 5 Ds/3 Rs in Senate)**
- **Redistricting**
- **Nastiness**

House Races

<u>Current House Composition</u>	
Democrats	213
Republicans (2 GOP seats vacant)	220

<u>House Race Ratings</u>	<u>Vulnerable</u>
Democrats	10
Republicans	15

Trump Top of Ticket and Primaries

Huge retirements: Eshoo, Wenstrup, Burgess, Bucshon

Senate Races

<u>Current Senate Composition</u>	
Democrats (includes 3 Ind)	51
Republicans	49

<u>Senators Up in 2024</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Vulnerable</u>
Democrats	23	3*
Republicans	11	0

***Sen. Brown (OH), Sen. Sinema (AZ), Sen. Tester (MT)**

Huge retirement: Sen. Manchin (WV) “X” factor in negotiations

RADPAC Money in 2023 vs. 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Hard Money Raised	\$906,313	\$968,418
Contributors	2,103	2,430
Practices Making Contributions	59	70

- Hosted 7 fundraising events in DC raising more than \$100k.
- Attended more than 150 fundraising events.
- Organized more than 15 site visits.
- Named sponsor of the Women's Congressional Softball Game.

Need Engagement!!!

Host Practice Visit

“Provider Steering Committee”

ACR Hill Day

Contribute to RADPAC

RBMA Advocacy Efforts



Other GR Contacts

Federal Legislation:

Josh Cooper: jcooper@acr.org, Ashley Walton: awalton@acr.org,
Rebecca Spangler: rspangler@acr.org

NIH:

Katy Grady: kgrady@acr.org

Regulatory Affairs:

Mike Peters: mpeters@acr.org (really in the know with AI issues)

State Affairs:

Eugenia Brandt: ebrandt@acr.org & Dillon Harp: dharp@acr.org

Ted Burnes

Senior Director Political Affairs & RADPAC

tburnes@acra.org

Cell: 703-725-6028