



WVOS Reimbursement Alert

JOBS BILL PASSES THE SENATE

INCLUDES TEMPORARY PHYSICIAN PAYMENT FIX

The Senate vote on March 10th approved a wide-ranging bill that included a delay in the 21.2% physician pay cut in Medicare reimbursement until October 1st. The passing of this bill would also send another \$25 billion to the states to help them fund their Medicaid programs for another six months.

Wednesday's legislation passed only after the Senate voted, 66 to 33, to limit debate. The final vote saw rare bipartisan support, as the bill was backed by 6 Republicans, 54 Democrats and two independents. 35 Republicans and Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., voted no.

The American Medical Association stated the Baucus bill appeared to be a compromise between senators who wanted to implement a one-year payment fix and others who were seeking another "short bridge" to give Congress more time to possibly repeal the formula that calls for annual physician payment cuts.

Among many things the bill would also push back the deadline to file for extended jobless benefits and the federal subsidy for COBRA health insurance until Dec. 31, extend dozens of tax provisions extends two Recovery Act provisions for small businesses and provides \$354 million to continue funding the increased Small Business Administration guarantee and fee waiver through year's end. Additionally, the bill continues several tax credits targeted at both businesses and individuals that had lapsed at the end of 2009, including a popular research and development credit.

What happens now? The House would either have to take up the Senate legislation or lawmakers from both chambers would have to meet to iron out differences between their versions of legislation before it can signed by the President. Stay tuned.