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Public Health & Policy

## House Delays SGR Cuts, ICD-10 for a Year

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By [David Pittman](#), Washington Correspondent, MedPage Today

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WASHINGTON -- The House of Representatives acted Thursday to delay for a year problems physicians were facing with two three-letter acronyms: ICD and SGR.

Lawmakers voted to delay the switch to the ICD-10 coding system until Oct. 1, 2015. The bill containing that provision also delays by 12 months pending reimbursement cuts under Medicare's sustainable growth rate (SGR) payment formula.

The legislation also delays a requirement for hospitals to comply with the "two-midnight" rule for inpatient reimbursement, and pushes back recovery audits of allegedly unnecessary claims until March 2015.

The measure was approved via voice vote under a suspension of normal House rules -- despite a great deal of opposition from Democrats.



The bill now moves on to the Senate, where Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), the newly appointed chair of the Senate Finance Committee, which oversees Medicare, is pushing for a permanent solution to the SGR. Washington lawmakers, while agreeing on a policy for an SGR resolution this spring, have been unable to find a way to pay for the bill.

Under the SGR formula, physician payments will drop by roughly 24% on April 1 unless the Senate passes the measure now being considered.

A long list of physician groups -- including the American Medical Association (AMA), the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Alliance of Specialty Medicine -- opposed the 12-month SGR patch, saying it would derail efforts to permanently kill the SGR.

The AMA questioned the political fortitude of those on Capitol Hill.

"There was bipartisan, bicameral support for reform this year, yet too many in Congress lacked the courage and wherewithal to permanently fix Medicare to improve care for patients and provide greater certainty for physician practices," AMA President Ardis Dee Hoven, MD, said in a statement.

With elections looming in November, organized medicine will likely have to start anew with its lobbying efforts under a new Congress next year.

Physician groups -- although they oppose the SGR patch -- have been pushing for help on ICD-10, which they received Thursday.

Groups like the AMA have been lobbying the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to delay the switch to the ICD-10 system to give physicians more time for the transition. But with CMS firmly against another delay, Congress stepped in to give an extra year.

UPDATE: This article, originally published on March 27 at 13:24 EST, was updated with new material at 17:06 EST.

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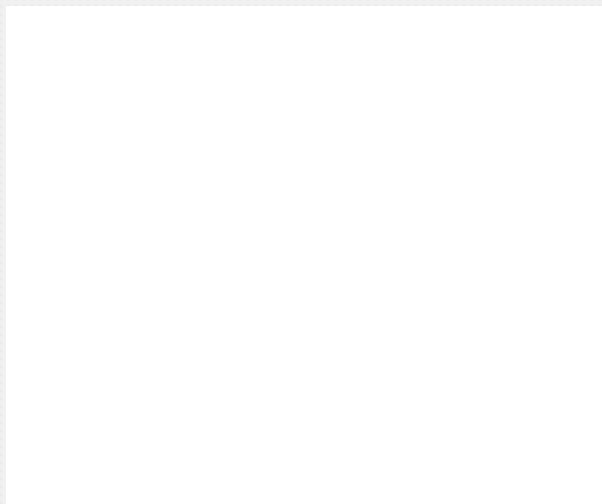
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