



Welcome to the winter edition of the AMA's Very Influential Physician (VIP) Insider. Read on for details about these topics:

- The "lame duck" session is Congress' last chance to cancel Medicare physician payment cuts
- At the races – the dust starts to settle on the 2022 midterms
- Webinar: "Elections 2022 & Advocacy: Adapting Your Strategy Based on the Midterm Elections
- Which meeting times are better

Medicare physician payment cuts are coming

We know this sounds like a broken record but - physicians are facing another round of Medicare payment cuts by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Unless Congress acts by the end of the year, physician Medicare payments are planned to be cut by 8.42 percent in 2023 which would severely impede patient access to care due to the forced closure of physician practices and put further strain on those that remained open during the pandemic.

[Tell Congress to protect America's Medicare patients and stop the cuts!](#)

These scheduled cuts will come in the form of:

- **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.** CMS has proposed a 4.42% cut for all physician services in 2023 to offset payment policy improvements in office and facility-based visits.
- **No inflationary update.** Physicians are the only providers whose Medicare payments do not automatically receive an annual inflationary update; during this time of record inflation on the heels of a highly disruptive pandemic, this statutory flaw amplifies the impact of proposed payment cuts.

When adjusted for inflation, Medicare physician payments have dropped by 22% from 2001 to 2021. Physicians simply cannot afford to operate under the current payment system. Congress must reform the Medicare physician payment system to make it simpler, more reflective of real-world physician practice costs and more predictable for both physicians and CMS before it's too late!

Recently, **Representatives Ami Bera, MD (D-CA) and Larry Bucshon, MD (R-IN) introduced H.R. 8800 the "Supporting Medicare Providers Act"** to help address the flawed payment system and provide relief from the devastating cuts.

This is a great first step, but with only a handful of days before the election, it is critical that Congress act to pass this or any other legislation that will prevent these devastating cuts in the "lame duck" session. Please take a moment and [contact your Senators and Representative](#) to tell them to cancel the cuts!

At the races – the dust starts to settle on the 2022 midterms

By [CQ's Mary Ellen McIntire](#), [Kate Ackley](#), [Niels Lesniewski](#) and [Daniela Altimari](#)

Just a week after Election Day, candidates began declaring for 2024. West Virginia Rep. Alex Mooney announced Tuesday he would seek the Republican nomination for the state's Senate seat, currently held by Democrat Joe Manchin III. Both Louisiana senators are set to announce whether they will seek the governor's mansion next year. Later Tuesday, former President Donald Trump announced he is running for his old job in the White House. Some Republicans, like Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene and Rep.-elect Max Miller, said they backed Trump's 2024 bid, while others have said they hope others enter the race.

"The greatest entertainment — you know, since 'SNL' — is the debates, the Republican debates," North Dakota Sen. Kevin Cramer told reporters on Wednesday.

That's all happening as political watchers turn again to Georgia, where a runoff between Sen. Raphael Warnock and Republican challenger Herschel Walker will determine the size of Democrats' Senate majority for the next two years. (Democrats secured at least 50 seats over the weekend, when Nevada Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto's win was called.) Warnock's campaign has a new ad featuring Trump hyping Walker during his speech Tuesday, with an on-screen tagline that says "Stop Donald Trump Stop Herschel Walker."

As outside groups announced their initial spending plans for the runoff, the National Republican Senatorial Committee and the Senate Leadership Fund — the main GOP super PAC allied with Sen. Mitch McConnell — sparred publicly. Meanwhile, Sen. Rick Scott, the NRSC chair, challenged McConnell to be the minority leader. McConnell won that contest.

Democrats will pick their leaders after Thanksgiving, but Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday she won't be leading the House caucus again. Along with picking her successor — likely New York Rep. Hakeem Jeffries — House Democrats will pick a leader for their campaign committee. California Reps. Ami Bera and Tony Cárdenas have both said they are running for the post, although there is some discussion about whether it should be an appointed position, rather than elected. Bera said he's neutral on the change, but he is proceeding as though it would be elected.

Republicans in both the House and Senate have selected who will lead their respective campaign arms over the next two years. North Carolina Rep. Richard Hudson will lead the National Republican Congressional Committee, while Montana Sen. Steve Daines will take charge at the NRSC — when his Democratic counterpart, Sen. Jon Tester, is up for reelection.

Meanwhile, Republicans have definitely flipped the House. The Associated Press called GOP Rep. Mike Garcia's race in his favor Wednesday evening, giving the party at least 218 seats, enough for what will be a tight majority.

Starting gate

Making it there: A slate of wins by Republicans aligned with Trump in New York has Democrats wondering what happened. One answer, from Democratic political strategist Bruce Gyory: "Nobody owns Long Island."

Leaders elected: Kevin McCarthy got the nod from House Republicans to be their nominee for speaker, but he'll need to secure 218 votes, nearly the entire conference, before a January floor vote, Lindsey McPherson writes. Outgoing NRCC Chair Tom Emmer was elected as the majority whip, the No. 3 leadership position, on the second ballot.

K Street goes hunting: K Street is taking stock of the crop of soon-to-be ex-members of Congress, those who are retiring or lost their races. Headhunters and lobbyists in charge of recruiting for downtown gigs say a number of exiting members — but not all — may field lucrative overtures from K Street.

Deja lose: Many House races featured challengers who ran against the same incumbents before. And in most cases, the incumbents won again, CQ Roll Call's Laura Weiss and Ariel Cohen report.

Map factor: While both parties drew post-apportionment maps to help their side, experts said Republicans used the redistricting process after the 2020 census to retain a small, but measurable, advantage, CQ Roll Call's Michael Macagnone reports.

Biden's back: President Joe Biden returned to the White House from Asia shortly after midnight Thursday morning, with the House officially going to the Republicans hours before his return. During the trip, he said that one thing the midterm election results did make clear was that the United States remains "ready to play" on the world stage.

ICYMI

What's left: The AP's tally of called races stood at midday Thursday at 218 Republicans vs. 211 Democrats, with six uncalled. Democrats who were leading are Reps. Mary Peltola of Alaska and Katie Porter of California. Republican leaders were Reps. Lauren Boebert of Colorado and David Valadao of California, plus Kevin Kiley and John Duarte in California's open 3rd and 13th districts. If those races all break the way they stand now, the GOP would have a 222-213 majority.

Blue wall?: Republicans' hopes that shifting attitudes among Latino voters would help them capture seats along the border with Mexico did not pan out, CQ Roll Call's Suzanne Monyak reports.

Ballot bucks: A year-end spending package should include \$400 million to upgrade voting infrastructure, but the House and Senate might not reach agreement to do that, Illinois Democratic Rep. Mike Quigley and election administrators said during an event at Capitol Hill's popular Hawk 'N' Dove watering hole. The event was sponsored by The Center for Tech and Civic Life and CQ Roll Call.

Just a dream?: Advocates say voters' approval of a ballot measure allowing undocumented college students to pay in-state tuition in Arizona, a state where Republicans have become increasingly concerned about border crossings, could provide momentum for policy changes on Capitol Hill, CQ Roll Call's Caroline Coudriet reports.

Noobs arrive: For 25-year-old Florida Democrat Maxwell Frost, it was like school. Texas Republican Wesley Hunt worked the room like he was running for something. CQ Roll Call's Jim Saksa surveys the scene as incoming House freshmen start orientation.

Eyeballs emoji: A late-in-the-cycle donation from a former House GOP leadership aide to a Democratic member is raising eyebrows among Republicans on Capitol Hill. Insider's Dave Levinthal spied a \$1,000 contribution from Neil Bradley — who is executive vice president, chief policy officer and head of strategic advocacy for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce — to Democratic Rep. Abigail Spanberger on Nov. 3. The chamber endorsed Spanberger, whose race was viewed as a key bellwether on election night to assess how big a GOP wave might be. She first won her seat in 2018, beating then-Rep. Dave Brat, the tea party Republican who ousted then-House Majority Leader Eric Cantor in a shocking primary result in 2014. Bradley, who worked for Cantor, also gave \$1,000 each to Democratic Reps. Josh Gottheimer of New Jersey and Henry Cuellar of Texas. He also gave \$7,000 combined to 10 Republicans, including Mike Lawler, who defeated Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Sean Patrick Maloney; Rep. Don Bacon of Nebraska; Rep. David Valadao of California; and Barbara Kirkmeyer, who lost in Colorado's 8th District, according to a Chamber spokesman.

Webinar: "Elections 2022 & Advocacy: Adapting Your Strategy Based on the Midterm Elections"

Please Join our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation for an upcoming webinar focusing on how to adapt your advocacy strategy based on the midterm elections. Full details including date, time and how to register below:

When: November 30, 2022 at 3:00 PM EST

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Many advocates wake up the morning after an election to discover that the long-standing champions for their cause have been sent packing, causing a scramble to cultivate new congressional proponents on the Hill. Based on CMF research, including the first-ever survey of freshmen congressional offices, participants will learn about what it's like to set up and work in a freshman congressional office and how that impacts the strategies that many advocates commonly use to introduce themselves to new Members of Congress.

This program is based on exclusive and private surveys of congressional staff conducted by CMF and is available only to members of CMF's Partnership for a More Perfect Union.

The webinar will be conducted by Bradford Fitch, President and CEO of CMF.

If you have any questions regarding this presentation, please contact Anna Lee Hirschi at ahirschi@CongressFoundation.org.

Which meeting times are better?

Our friends at The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) wanted to know whether congressional staff prefer to meet with constituents when Congress is in session or in recess. They asked congressional staff the following question:

"When is the best time for a constituent to meet with you on a policy-related matter (When Congress is in session or not in session)?"

What they learned: Congressional staff prefer to meet with constituents when Congress is not in session. While less than one-third (29%) said that they prefer to meet with constituents when Congress is in session, more than two-thirds (71%) said they prefer to meet when Congress is not in session. Advocacy organizations have to book their fly-in events long before the House and Senate unveil their legislative calendars, making it impossible to guarantee that their fly-in events will take place while Congress is in session. Although constituents are understandably disappointed if they have traveled to DC, only to learn their Member is back home, the good news is that they gain an opportunity to build a stronger relationship with their Member's staff as well as a chance to meet their Member at another time in the district. Recess meetings between congressional staff and constituents are often longer (lasting at least 30 minutes), and much more substantive.

DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Christmas Day	26 Christmas Day (observed)	27	28	29	30	31

Senate in Session	House in Session	Both Chambers in Session
State Work Periods	District Work Periods	Both Work Periods



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