



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

- Ask Congress to help save physician practices from crippling inflation
- What should your social media posts include?
- Which senators still undecided about 2024 runs will matter most?
- AMPAC hosts 2023 Candidate Workshop in Washington, D.C.

Ask Congress to help save physician practices from crippling inflation

Stop us if you've heard this before – physician Medicare payments have declined relative to inflation and will continue to do so unless Congress acts to fix flawed and outdated payment rules.

[Tell your legislators to cosponsor H.R. 2474 to provide annual MEI updates to physician payment](#)

As you may know, physicians are the only providers whose Medicare payments do not automatically receive an annual inflationary update. As a result, Medicare physician payments have lagged 26% behind the rate of inflation growth since 2001. During this current period of record inflation and coming on the heels of a highly disruptive pandemic, this statutory flaw often amplifies the impact of other payment policy changes like "budget neutrality" adjustments, performance incentives, and so forth.

Thankfully, a bi-partisan group of physician members of Congress - Representatives Larry Bucshon, MD (IN), Raul Ruiz, MD (CA), Mariannette Miller-Meeks, MD (IA) and Ami Bera, MD (CA) recently introduced H.R. 2474, legislation that would reform this flawed system and provide annual inflationary updates, based on the Medicare Economic Index (MEI), for Medicare physician services, similar to updates received by other health care providers.

While there are many other concerns with the Medicare physician payment system that still need to be addressed, this legislation is a great first step toward fixing payment inequities and injecting more financial stability into physician practices, allowing them to invest in new ways of providing care and ultimately assuring Medicare beneficiaries have access to high-quality care.

Please take a moment and [contact your legislators](#) and urge them to help fix the flawed Medicare physician payment system by supporting H.R. 2474 today!

What should your social media posts include?

With the advent of social media and its vital role in citizen advocacy, our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) wanted to know what congressional staff find most compelling in social media posts from constituents. They asked staff the following question:

"How helpful is it for social media posts from constituents to include the following"

What they learned: Constituent-specific information is extremely valuable to congressional staff. A wide majority (85%) of staff said constituents' reasons for supporting/opposing the legislation are most valuable, and 70% said the full name of individual posting the message is helpful. Additionally, a large majority (70%) of offices found how the bill would specifically impact the legislator's district or state to be pertinent. **Citizen advocates should strive for clarity, specificity, and transparency in their social media campaigns.** Taking a cue from congressional staff, citizen advocates should be mindful that their social media posts authentically communicate about the issue, themselves, and how the legislation would affect constituents.

Source: Partnership for a More Perfect Union, Copyright Congressional Management Foundation, <http://CongressFoundation.org>. Used with permission.

Which senators still undecided about 2024 runs will matter most?

By [Nathan L. Gonzales](#)

A batch of reelection announcements over the past few weeks helped bring the battle for the Senate into focus. But there are still a few senators who haven't revealed their decision to seek another term, including Democrat Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, whose decision will have the most significant impact on the battle for Senate control.

Up to this point, there haven't been a lot of surprises.

There are currently three open seat races. Republican Sen. Mike Braun of Indiana is running for governor and GOP Rep. Jim Banks is the clear front-runner to replace him, even though the primary is still more than a year away. Eighty-nine-year-old Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein is not running for reelection in California, but Democrats shouldn't have trouble holding her seat. And Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow is not running again in Michigan, where Democrats have a narrow advantage in neutral conditions.

In January, there were a few hours of drama surrounding Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine's future, but he announced for reelection.

Sen. Sherrod Brown announced his reelection bid way back in November, which is good for Democrats since he's probably the only Democrat who can win statewide in Ohio right now. Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan was widely praised for his 2022 Senate bid, and he still lost by 6

points to a Republican running an underwhelming campaign.

Similarly to Ohio, Sen. Jon Tester is one of the only Democrats who can probably win statewide in Montana right now. He announced his reelection campaign in February.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren announced her reelection bid for a third term on March 27, even though she initially misspoke and told MSNBC host Lawrence O'Donnell that she was running for president. Old habits die hard, I guess.

Warren's decision wasn't a surprise (particularly since she actually mentioned it in May of 2021), and she should have an easy path to reelection. It would be shocking if former GOP Gov. Charlie Baker ran against her. He's still settling into his new job as president of the NCAA and he would likely struggle in a federal contest (if he could win a GOP primary), even though he received high marks from Democrats as governor. Voters make different calculations when control of the Senate is on the line.

More recently, Sens. Jacky Rosen of Nevada, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, and Bob Casey of Pennsylvania all announced their reelection bids in what should be a trio of competitive races. Based on the resiliency of Democratic incumbents in 2022, this is good news for Democrats trying to hold onto their narrow majority in 2024. Republicans need a net gain of two seats for the Senate majority, or a net gain of just one seat for control of the Senate if they also win the White House because the new vice president could break tie votes.

Still, a handful of senators have not announced their 2024 intentions yet.

Manchin

Even though he's won six statewide elections in West Virginia, Manchin is arguably the most vulnerable senator in the country. He told NBC in early April that he wouldn't decide whether to run for reelection [until the end of the year](#). The filing deadline is in January.

That seems very late for one of the most vulnerable senators, particularly as GOP Gov. Jim Justice moves closer to getting into the race. Even though Manchin had \$9.7 million in his campaign account at the end of March, it's hard to imagine Democrats giving Justice a head start in full campaign mode.

If Manchin does run again, he's not guaranteed to win. West Virginia has shifted significantly since he was last on the ballot. Manchin was reelected in 2018 by just 3 points and with less than 50 percent of the vote against a flawed opponent, state Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, when West Virginia's Democratic Baseline was 45.4 percent. But that Baseline dropped to 37.6 percent following the 2022 elections. If Manchin overperforms by the same amount in 2024 as he did in 2018, he'd fall short of 42 percent and likely lose reelection. If Manchin doesn't run again, it's a likely pickup for Republicans.

Sinema

Independent Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona is the other high profile senator who has not announced a reelection decision.

A couple weeks ago, the [Wall Street Journal published details](#) of a slide deck from a recent staff retreat that included a timeline for the senator's reelection announcement. It called for getting a poll and opposition research done by the end of September and staffing up by the

end of the year. But the slide deck doesn't mean she's running again. It's just something you should be doing to put yourself in a position to run.

Sinema has some time, considering the filing deadline isn't until next April. But it will take more time and money than usual to get on the ballot as an independent. According to the Journal, she'll need to gather an estimated 40,000-plus signatures from nonaffiliated voters.

Unlike Manchin, Tester, and Brown, Sinema's decision isn't as consequential to Democratic efforts to hold the Senate majority. Her presence complicates the race, but she's not essential to a Democratic victory. Her own path to victory looks limited considering she's not popular among Democrats or Republicans, and there's no guarantee she'll draw disproportionately from either of the two major party nominees.

Cardin

Democratic Sen. Ben Cardin's meager first-quarter fundraising fueled rumors that he won't seek reelection in Maryland. He raised just \$15,000 in the first three months of the year and had just shy of \$1 million in his campaign account. If he runs, he's not likely to face serious opposition, but the open seat would create some uncertainty with a competitive Democratic primary.

Republicans would love for former Gov. Larry Hogan to run. He was popular among Democrats as an inoffensive governor, but federal races with control of the Senate on the line are different, and Hogan might have trouble in a Republican primary as well. And it appears that Hogan has his hopes for higher office, including president at some point (not in 2024, though).

In the end, Democrats are likely to hold Maryland with or without Cardin. The only question is whether it's an open seat race or not.

[Continue reading](#)

AMPAC hosts 2023 Candidate Workshop in Washington, D.C.

Have you ever wondered what it takes to run for political office? Recently, 20 participants from across the country found out at the AMA offices in Washington, D.C., where they learned what it takes to be a successful candidate for public office.

Attendees of the two-day AMPAC Candidate Workshop were taught the ins and outs of running a winning political campaign. The agenda included a bevy of bipartisan political veterans who spoke from years of experience on topics such as:

- The secret of effective fundraising
- The importance of developing a disciplined campaign plan and message
- How different forms of messaging including direct mail, social media and television can be effectively leveraged to campaign
- The impact being a candidate can have on one's family and practice

The program included a keynote session featuring Congressman Larry Bucshon, MD (R-IN), on his experiences of running, and winning, as a physician and the importance of having physicians in elected office.

The candidate workshop is just one of the political education programs that AMPAC provides for physicians, spouses and state medical society staff who have ever entertained running for public office. For more information on these programs please visit AMPACOnline.org.



Advocacy calendar

MAY

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	26	27
28	29 Memorial Day	30	31			

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

Be sure to follow all the AMA's Physician Grassroots Network social media accounts for all the latest news on physician advocacy and what you can do to make sure your voice is heard on Capitol Hill.



[AMA Advocacy](#)



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