



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

- August recess is in full swing – tell your members of Congress it's time to Fix Medicare Now!
- Advocacy strategies – what actions can advocates take to build relationships with Congress?
- The 10 Senate seats most likely to flip in 2024
- The House: district by district slugfest endures amidst top of the ticket turmoil

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### **August recess is in full swing – tell your members of Congress it's time to Fix Medicare Now!**

The Congressional recess is in full swing and physician advocates just like you have been taking advantage of the unique opportunities to engage with their members of Congress while they're "back home."

[Find out how you can take advantage of the August recess and tell Congress to Fix Medicare Now!](#)

This fall the American Medical Association's top federal priority remains reforming Medicare's broken physician payment system, and we need your help!

According to an AMA analysis of Medicare Trustees data, Medicare physician payment has been reduced 29% adjusted for inflation from 2001–2024. The Medicare physician payment system lacks an adequate annual physician payment update, unlike those that apply to other Medicare provider payments.

Unfortunately, CMS' recent proposed rule has physicians slated for an additional 2.8 percent Medicare payment reduction on January 1. This latest inexcusable cut looms despite the fact that CMS also projects the increase to the MEI to be 3.6 percent in 2025.

That's why it's so urgent that Congress work with the physician community to develop long-term solutions to the systematic problems with the Medicare physician payment system and preserve patient access to quality care.

Earlier this month, the AMA [hosted a webinar](#) featuring Jason Marino, AMA Director of Congressional Affairs, who provided an update on the current state of Medicare physician payment legislation and what lies ahead during the 118th Congress and advocacy expert David Lusk of Key Advocacy who provided best practices for engaging legislators in-district including how to prepare for in-district legislative meetings, host Members of Congress at site visits, and interacting with elected officials online.

To make these interactions with your legislators as impactful as possible, the AMA has developed an online [August recess resources site](#) that is your one-stop-shop for toolkits, legislative calls to action, issue briefs, infographics and detailed information on scheduling and preparing for legislative meetings and other in-district opportunities.

It's not too late to fight for your practice and your patients - Please take advantage of the August recess to let your members of Congress know that it's time to Fix Medicare Now! Everyone agrees that the Medicare physician payment system is broken – let's do something about it!

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### **Advocacy strategies - what actions can advocates take to build relationships with Congress?**

Our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation wanted to identify actions that constituents can take to build relationships with their congressional representatives. To find out, they asked congressional staff the following question.

*"In thinking about constituents and the groups that represent them (e.g., associations, nonprofits, companies), what should they do more or less of to build better relationships with your office and your Member/Senator?"*

**What they learned:** WHO should advocates get to know? Legislative assistants and district directors. And **WHAT** should advocates do to build relationships with them?

- Provide materials that show district/state impact – 85% of staff told CMF that advocates should provide materials (charts, maps, or infographics) more often that illustrate how issues effect the district/state.

- Send materials BEFORE meetings – 76% of staff said that advocates should more often send briefing materials in advance of the meetings. Doing so allows staff time to better prepare to make the meeting more effective and productive.
- Hold district/state meetings – 59% of congressional staff agreed that advocates should organize more meetings at home in the district/state.

These responses are based on an online survey of congressional staff to solicit their opinions on best practices for citizen communications and advocacy strategies. The majority of respondents are staff in senior-level positions: Chiefs of Staff, Legislative Directors, Communications Directors, and Legislative Assistants.

**Source:** Partnership for a More Perfect Union, Copyright Congressional Management Foundation, CongressFoundation.org. Used with permission.

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## **The 10 Senate seats most likely to flip in 2024**

By [Simone Pathe](#), CNN

### **1. West Virginia**

Both Democrats and Republicans have essentially been treating this seat as a GOP pickup since Sen. Joe Manchin announced he [wasn't running for reelection](#). The onetime Democratic senator tried last month to put to rest chatter that he could run as an independent against Republican nominee Jim Justice, the current governor, in the Trump-friendly state. "I'm not running for any office, political office," Manchin [told](#) CNN's Manu Raju in June shortly after [registering as an independent](#). He did, however, leave a little bit of wiggle room ahead of the August 1 filing deadline, adding, "You always have options, because life is full of surprises."

Justice, a former Democrat, has had his share of troubling headlines – about [his business practices](#), for example – but he's a popular and well-known second-term governor who easily dispatched Rep. Alex Mooney in the [May Republican primary](#). And Manchin, the most conservative member of the Senate Democratic Caucus, was clear about the challenge of running in a state that's moved so sharply to the right, noting that the "D" brand in West Virginia had grown "toxic."

### **2. Montana**

Sen. Jon Tester needs to overperform the top of the ticket in a state that twice backed Trump by double digits. Tester has won tough elections before – including in 2018, when Trump was

in the White House – but this is the first year he will be on the same ballot as the former president. [Continue reading](#)

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### **The House: district by district slugfest endures amidst top of the ticket turmoil**

By [Larry Sabato](#), [Sabato's Crystal Ball](#)

Our operating theory throughout this election season has been that the winner of the presidency probably will also win the House of Representatives majority. Because the House is so evenly divided, one would assume, in an era where ticket-splitting has been declining, that the presidential winner would provide enough down-ballot “lift” to enable his or her party to also win the House majority.

This might be especially the case if Republicans won the White House, because it would be very odd, historically, for one party to flip the White House while simultaneously losing a House majority they held going into the election. That has never happened in any presidential election cycle in the current two-party era, which dates back to right before the Civil War.

That is not to say that it couldn't happen—and, in fact, the circumstances of this particular election increase the likelihood of this seemingly bizarre outcome. [Continue reading](#)

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# SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2 Labor Day	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	30					

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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