



February 23, 2024

Welcome to *Washington Update*, the weekly e-newsletter on the latest health care happenings in the nation's capital that affect APG's members.

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## **APG Continues To Seek Member Input On Proposed CMS Medicare Advantage Payment Update**

As reported in [Washington Update](#) last week, APG and other stakeholders are preparing to share comments with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) by the March 1 deadline regarding the potential impacts of the recent [Medicare Advantage \(MA\) and Part D Advance Notice](#). Physician groups that partner with MA plans continue to report concerns over CMS's proposal, fearing potential flat or negative updates in the agency's payments to some plans, which may jeopardize contract terms with providers and affect benefits and out-of-pocket costs for enrolled patients.

This week, in an exclusive APG-member focus group, Jennifer Podulka and Valinda Rutledge met with members to gather input for APG's comment letter. Additionally, APG leaders have joined the policy and advocacy team to highlight these concerns through virtual fly-ins with Congressional staff.

As APG members continue to analyze the impact of CMS's proposal on their organizations, they are encouraged to contact Jennifer Podulka at [jpodulka@apg.org](mailto:jpodulka@apg.org) to share feedback, insights, and any available data.



## **Congress Returns Next Week As Funding Deadlines Loom**

Congress is set to reconvene in Washington next week as March deadlines loom for adopting final legislation on fiscal 2024 government spending. Important dates are March 1 for finalizing spending packages for the Food and Drug Administration and Veterans Administration, among other federal agencies, and March 8 for appropriations for the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services. Core issues include extending through 2024 and beyond spending on such key health care activities as support for community health centers.

House Republicans are negotiating funding totals for fiscal year 2024, with the possibility of another continuing resolution (CR) extending beyond the March 1 and March 8 deadlines to avoid a government shutdown. Complicating matters is the April 30 deadline to prevent a one percent across-the-board spending cut under the [Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023](#).

Modifications to the 2024 Medicare physician fee cut and an extension of the Medicare bonuses for clinicians are possible provisions for inclusion in an extenders package, issues on which APG continues its advocacy efforts.



## **HHS Launches New Maternal Health Collaborative**

The U.S. Department for Health and Human Services (HHS) recently announced an opportunity for providers in six states to help shape maternal health policy. Through its new "[Postpartum Maternal Health Collaborative](#)," HHS aims to harness the expertise of federal and state maternal health experts, health care providers, and community partners in Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and New Mexico to address postpartum challenges and reduce maternal mortality rates.

Aligned with the Biden administration's [2022 White House Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis](#), these collaboratives work in conjunction with the National Governors Association's "Improving Maternal and Child Health in America State and Territory Policy Learning Collaborative," focusing on policies to improve maternal and child health outcomes, particularly in rural areas.



## APG Announcements And Offerings

- Registration is open for the APG Spring Conference in San Diego from May 29-31. APG members can save \$300 with the Super Early Bird rate (February 29 deadline). Register [here](#).
- Want to get more involved in APG's Federal advocacy efforts? [Join APG Advocates today](#).



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