Medicare Reforms Not Top Priorities For Congress, But Plenty Happening At CMS

Congress returns from Thanksgiving with three weeks left in the legislative session, and a few health care policies are in the mix as lawmakers consider budget reconciliation, appropriations and tax reform legislation. However, Medicare and FDA reforms are not among the big-ticket items.

Although further Medicare reform is not expected this year, Congress this spring replaced the Sustainable Growth Rate formula with a system that CMS must develop in the coming years, and input that CMS receives from providers will help guide the agency as it implements Congress’ most significant Medicare reform since the Affordable Care Act. Medical specialty societies have submitted comments on revamping Medicare’s physician-pay system. Both Congress and CMS hope alternative models to fee-for-service Medicare spread widely in future years.