

## **Update on MaineCare Physician Fee Increase**

MMA staff and several specialty society representatives met with MaineCare officials last Wednesday to discuss the \$8.5 million physician fee increase approved in Part I of the state budget, effective July 1, 2005. The additional state appropriation, along with matching federal funds, will allow the Bureau of Medical Services to increase all rates to a minimum of 53% of the Medicare rate. Bureau staff, led by MaineCare medical director Lauren Biczak, D.O., shared the following analysis which details the impact on each specialty. Under the proposal, no existing payments would be reduced.

Most of the comments made at the meeting were favorable. As the Bureau can make the changes to the fee schedule without going through rule-making, most participants felt it was important to move the proposal along so that the changes could be implemented and ready for July 1.

While the Legislature has re-opened the Part I budget, it appears unlikely that the fee increase would be taken away. Nonetheless, the sooner the increase is built into the fee schedule, the better.

In the following charts, the percent increase for each specialty is found in the seventh column from the left.