

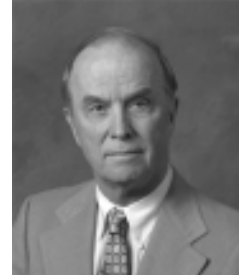


## President's Comment

**David O. Taber, M.D.**

*President*

*El Paso County Medical Society*



I want to extend to all my colleagues in the El Paso County Medical Society a Happy and Prosperous New Year. This year we face many challenges. The most prominent of which is the dilemma in the Medicare reimbursement system. As you are aware by now the 10.1% reduction in Medicare reimbursement was reversed at the last minute. This has occurred in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. In 2008, however the time interval for reversing this reduction has been shortened to only six months. It seems to me that our US Congress has been remiss in correcting the Medicare reimbursement problem for a protracted period of time. The present system has stemmed from the SRG, Sustainable Growth Rate, system put into play since 1992. It was based on RBRV scale and factored by physicians work, package expense and profession liability. This system has not withstood the test of time and needs to be replaced. A new system needs to be developed which will take into account the increasing number of senior citizens, the increase of senior citizens with chronic diseases and the increased longevity of our citizens. At the present time approximately 5% of the Medicare recipients with chronic disease account for almost approximately 50% of the total Medicare bill.

If Medicare/Medicaid program hopes to maintain their enrollment of participants of physicians, they will need to change the reimbursement system across the board. Otherwise, access for seniors will be severely compromised. At the present time, there are many physicians in the community who do not accept any Medicare or Medicaid patients. An informal survey recently conducted by the El Paso County Medical Society revealed if a 10% cut is initiated sometime in 2008 that over 95% of the responding physicians said that they would stop seeing Medicare patient or limit the number of Medicare patients they would be willing to see.

It is time for a wake up call for our US Congress and Human and Health Services. They have been deferring the problem for the last six years. They need to do their homework so that they can come up with a well thought out fair system of reimbursement rather than practicing brinkmanship. Below I have listed the address and email address for our US Senators and our Congressman for our district so that hopefully your will respond and inform them of the urgent matter that needs to be resolved. Maybe with your feedback might be move them to correct the present situation.

**SENATOR KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON**

284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-4304  
202-224-5922  
202-224-0776 (FAX)

202-224-5903 (TDD)

961 Federal Building  
300 East 8th Street  
Austin, Texas 78701  
512-916-5834  
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<http://hutchison.senate.gov/contact.html>

**SENATOR JOHN CORNYN**

Washington DC  
517 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
Main: 202-224-2934  
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5300 Memorial Drive  
Suite 980  
Houston, TX 77007  
Main: 713-572-3337  
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<http://cornyn.senate.gov/contact.html>

**CONGRESSMAN SILVESTRE REYES**

Washington, DC  
2433 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-4831  
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El Paso Office  
310 N. Mesa, Suite 400  
El Paso, Texas 79901  
Phone: (915) 534-4400  
Fax: (915) 534-7426  
[http://www.house.gov/reyes/voice\\_your\\_opinion.asp](http://www.house.gov/reyes/voice_your_opinion.asp)

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David O. Taber, M.D.  
President  
El Paso County Medical Society