



President's Comment

Jose Aun, M.D.

President

El Paso County Medical Society



As I write this message, Summer is coming to an end. It certainly has been a very tumultuous and interesting summer. The summer began with our annual Border Health Caucus Conference in Washington, D.C. Thank you to Congressman Reyes and his staff for their help in organizing this conference. While we were in Washington, the Congress and President Obama were in the midst of their battle to raise the debt ceiling. We actively lobbied with our Congressmen and Senators for a permanent fix to the SGR formula. Our representatives were very understanding as to the ongoing crisis but said that there was very little that they could do to fix this problem. The projected cost to permanently fix SGR is approximately 500 plus billion dollars. The debt ceiling was raised through negotiations however, the SGR formula was not addressed. There is a possibility that Medicare physician rates will be reduced this fall when the select committee meets to reduce the deficit. This is on top of the 29% cut that is scheduled to go into effect at the end of the year. This is not good for medicine and for our elderly patients. We back a plan proposed by the AMA to repeal SGR and to have modest increases in physician reimbursement over the next 3 years while a permanent fix can be worked on in congress.

Dr. Malone president of TMA was in El Paso in mid August to attend a border health summit sponsored by the chamber of commerce. He also had lunch with the leadership of the El Paso County Medical Society including Dr. Michiel Noe who was recently elected to city council. Dr. Malone and the leadership also had a meeting with the editorial board of the El Paso Times to discuss the issues important to medicine. The medical society and the TMA will continue to fight for all the important issues and I will continue to keep you posted in future presidents messages.

Jose Aun, M.D.
President, El Paso County Medical Society

***** ALERT *****
IMPORTANT INFORMATION

It has come to our attention that a company by the name of "Media Marketing Group" is using the names of the following: SWAHAP, El Paso County Society Medical not EPCMS, El Paso District Dental Society and Juarez Medical groups promoting a Southwest Medical Directory.

They are misrepresenting these organizations as endorsing their journal and further as being "Members" and supporting their efforts.

Recently we have been contacted by numerous sources stating that they have purchased ads and received nothing in return. Once the exchange of money takes place, the marketing representative is no longer reachable.

In contacting the authorities, we were advised that anyone having contact with the "Media Marketing Group" please file a police report, whether or not there has been a loss of funds. This should cause attention to the issue.

Please forward this information to the person responsible for your Advertising and advise them that this is not an El Paso County Medical Society sponsored project.

6th Annual Border Health Conference Washington D.C.

Physicians from the Border Health Caucus traveled to Washington DC for the 6th Annual Border Health Conference. The objective of the conference was to develop solutions to the problems affecting health care along the entire border. Speakers were invited and participated from California, Arizona, Texas and from federal agencies. The Border Health Caucus continues to work with stakeholders, agency officials, and legislators to open a dialogue and to move in a direction to produce positive outcomes that will benefit not only Texas but the border and country as a whole. The BHC has worked closely with the US/Mexico Border Health Commission to identify areas of need and to help them educate decision makers.

The conference was consisted of two panels focused on addressing health care delivery, access to care along with the impact border security has on health care. Several members of the Texas congressional delegation were also part of the conference. Conference co-chair and sponsor, Congressman Silvestre Reyes, welcomed the

group and announced his Border Health Security Act. This legislation will be key in addressing the health care needs of the border. In addition, Representatives Ruben Hinojosa, Henry Cuellar, Francisco "Quico" Canseco, and Blake Farenthold took part as panelist and discussed their views on border health issues from a legislative perspective.

The day following the conference, the physicians of the Border Health Caucus led by Chairman Manuel Acosta, MD, visited the offices of the Texas Congressional delegation to discuss liability protections in Texas tort law, a solution to Medicare reimbursement rates, and other issues important to health care.

We wish to express our sincere to the family, the US-Mexico Border Health Commission, and Commissioners for the recent passing of David Reyna, General Manager U.S. Section.



Left to Right: Michelle Romero (TMA), Jose Aun, MD (El Paso), Gilbert Handal, MD (El Paso), Patsy Slaughter (El Paso County Medical Society), Syed Yusoof, MD (El Paso), Don Hairston (Molina Healthcare), Michael Speer, MD (TMA-President Elect), Victor Gonzalez, MD (McAllen), Jake Fuller (Border Health Caucus), Mariana Cardenas (Border Health Caucus), Luis Benavides, MD (Laredo/Border Health Caucus Vice-Chair), John Nava, MD (San Antonio), Manuel Acosta, MD (El Paso, Border Health Caucus Chairman)



Manuel Acosta, MD, Congressman Silvestre Reyes and Gilbert Handal, MD



Manuel Acosta, MD, and Congressman Ruben Hinojosa



Manuel Acosta, MD (left) and Gilbert Handal, MD (right)