



President's Comment

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I am writing this as my last presidents Message. I find it hard to believe that the year has gone by so fast. It has definitely been a very challenging and rewarding year. I have many people to thank. I would like to first thank my wife and children for all their patience and understanding as I had to be away at meetings. I would also like to thank the Executive board of the El Paso County Medical Society for all their help and contributions. Many thanks go out to Patsy Slaughter, Elsa Chaparro, and Diana Murillo for all their hard work and dedication in running the day to day operations of the El Paso County Medical Society.

This was a legislative year. Through the efforts of organized medicine, including lobbying trips by members of the medical society, we were able to protect the critical Tort reform constitutional amendment that was passed in 2003. This has helped the state to be able to recruit and maintain a significant amount of new physicians. We also fought to minimize the cuts to Medicaid rates so that physicians could continue to participate in this program and provide care to these patients. At the federal level, we participated in the Border Health Caucus conference and actively lobbied with the members of the Texas legislature to find a permanent repeal the flawed SGR formula on which Medicare physician's payments are set on. As I write this message, the House of Representatives have passed a bill in which the proposed 27% cut is reversed at the end of the year and physicians are given a modest 1% raise over the next two years. However, the bill that was passed has various omnibus provisions that will likely see this bill not pass Senate approval. Once again this issue will most likely go down to the wire and affect our elderly patients. The El Paso County Medical Society and TMA will continue to lobby to finally pass through meaningful reform to this system.

I would like to congratulate Dr. Bruce Applebaum on his Installation as the incoming president and wish him great success in his year. I will continue to be actively involved with the El Paso County Medical Society and organized medicine. This is definitely a very worthwhile endeavor and a fight worth fighting for.

Jose Aun, M.D.
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