



# Editorial Comment

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*When times are tough and people are frustrated and angry and hurting and uncertain, the politics of constant conflict may be good, but what is good politics does not necessarily work in the real world. What works in the real world is cooperation.*  
—**William J. Clinton**, 42nd U.S. President 1993-2001

*Reforming public education, cutting property taxes, fixing adult and child protective services and funding our budget can all occur when Democrats and Republicans engage in consensus and cooperation - not cynicism and combat.*  
—**Rick Perry**, 47th Texas Governor 2000-present

Above are quotations by two famous politicians on different sides of the political spectrum saying basically the same thing: Cooperation is how to achieve success. This generally holds true in politics, in medicine and in one's personal life. However, in all of these areas we tend to shy away from cooperation; instead we pick sides, we place blame, we get angry and we lose hope. To what end? These next few months to years will be a trying time for physicians and politicians alike.

What is cooperation? It is very different than compromise. Compromise is a way to reach "a settlement of differences by arbitration or by consent reached by mutual concessions."<sup>1</sup> In other words, each side sacrifices something in order to get something else each side wants. We are not going to compromise on fixing the SGR. We are not going to compromise on better reimbursements for Border Physicians.

Cooperation, on the other hand, is the "act of working or associating with another or others for mutual benefit."<sup>2</sup> Cooperation implies sitting together at the same table and working for a common good.

We as physicians will need to learn how to work with the politicians so that our needs and values are met and acknowledged. We will also need to learn how to work with each other. There has always been the occasional animosity among specialists, primary care physicians, hospitals, insurances and public health providers. Yet we all

should have the same goal—to improve the health and well-being of the individual and the community. In these new times with HIEs and EMRs and ACOs and the ACA (too many acronyms!) cooperation really will be the word of the day if we want to accomplish this common goal.

Some forms of basic cooperation are mentioned in this issue of the El Paso Physician. We have a public health article mentioning how cooperation between Public Health and PCPs is good for everyone when it comes to communicable diseases. We also have an article about Preterm births in El Paso and how we might intervene to reduce these high risk births. Lastly, we will be trying to increase the cooperation between the El Paso Physician TV Show and this magazine in future issues.

- 1. Merriam-Webster online dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>
- 2. Ibid

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