If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.

—James Madison (1751 - 1836), The Federalist Papers, 1788

I would like to touch on two major changes that will be going into effect in the next few months; some will affect us as providers and some as employers.

First, as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), there is a provision allowing an increase in payments to Medicaid providers. Initially, this provision was authorized to take effect on January 1, 2013, however Texas (and many other states) did not get the final federal regulations on the rate increase until November of 2012, so were not in time to begin payments in January 2013. As a result, the payment increase is planned to begin in September 2013, with payments retroactive to January 1, 2013. The payments will be increased to Medicare parity for 2 years for providers that qualify. Under the federal rules, providers qualify if:

1. They have a subspecialty designation of family practice, pediatrics, general internal medicine or a subspecialty within those designations that is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the American Board of Physician Specialties (ABPS) or the American Osteopathic Association (AOA).

2. More than 60% of the services provided are primary care services.

3. They complete a self-attestation form prior to payment increase (http://www.tmhp.com/Provider_Forems/Medicaid/ACA%20Primary%20Care%20Attestation.pdf)

For a comparison of current Medicaid payments with Medicare payments and probable NEW Medicaid payments after increase goes into effect, see table below (final payments will be based on geographic weighting—meaning El Paso will most likely get less than the rest of the state)

The second change involves the provision of ACA that states all citizens must hold health insurance. This will begin to start taking effect in 2014. In preparation for the number of individuals who will need health insurance, applications for coverage will be accepted starting October 1, 2013. The best place to get information on coverage and options, for both individuals & families and small business owners, is https://www.healthcare.gov.

If an individual does not have health insurance by the end of enrollment in March 2014, he/she will have to pay a fee in addition to 100% of any medical expenses.

The fee in 2014 will be 1% of yearly income or $95 per person for the year, whichever is higher. The fee increases every year. In 2016 it is 2.5% of income or $695 per person, whichever is higher. In 2014 the fee for uninsured children is $47.50 per child. The

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most a family would have to pay in 2014 is $285.

If you are an employer with fewer than 50 employees and want to know your options and requirements for providing health insurance coverage, please read section on small business owners at same website (https://www.healthcare.gov/small-businesses/).

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to announce an accomplishment for this magazine: we are now officially a part of Google Scholar! Google Scholar is a “freely accessible search engine that indexes the full text of scholarly literature across an array of publishing formats and disciplines.”

This new status we hold as a member of Google Scholar allows students, residents and others to search online for articles published in the El Paso Physician. It also gives articles that are published in the magazine a greater weight as peer-reviewed literature and will inspire us to elicit and edit more rigorous research. Many thanks are due to those on the editorial board of the magazine (specifically Diana, Elsa and Patsy) who made this quest a reality.


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Alison L. Days, M.D.
Editor, El Paso Physician Magazine

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In Loving Memory of Pilarita Galliguez Cortez
November 29, 1945 - July 23, 2013

Pilarita Cortez was born November 29, 1945 in Cavite, Philippines. She graduated with high honors from the University of the Philippines, College of Medicine in 1970, and came to America in 1971 for an internship. From 1972-1975, Pilar completed her pediatric residency at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland and then went on to complete her Behavioral Medicine rotation at Rochester, New York.

In 1979, as a Pediatrician and Child Development Specialist, Pilar enlisted with the United States Army as a Colonel. She is one of the first Filipina high ranking officers in the United States Army. She worked at William Beaumont Hospital at Fort Bliss where she was appointed Chief of Staff and inspected other military hospitals in the United States. From 1984-1986 Pilar was assigned in Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany with her family. After retiring from the military in August 1997, she went into private practice and became an Assistant Professor for the Medical Studies Program at Texas Tech's Paul Foster School of Medicine. She was also a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics and a member and advisor for the El Paso Autism Society. Pilar retired from Texas Tech's Paul Foster School of Medicine in December 2011.

Shortly thereafter, her daughter Christina passed away from her battle with Leukemia in October 2012. Pilar being the devoted person she was, spent her time assisting her son-in-law raising her grandson, Finley. Sadly, Pilar had a heart attack on July 23, 2013.

For many of us, Pilar was not only a colleague, but a friend. She was passionate about what she did, and we all loved her for it. Those whose lives she touched, either by helping a family with their child, or those of us she taught, she will forever be in our hearts, and her work will go on with what she has taught all of us. May we never forget her gentleness and compassion with families. We were blessed to have her all to ourselves in El Paso, but now, may she be able to watch over children with special needs everywhere. You inspired all of us to be better at what we do every day. Rest in peace our dear friend.