



## President's Comment

**David M. Palafox, M.D.**

*President*

*El Paso County Medical Society*



### Be a Hero

With all the new great things happening in our city, I wish to take this opportunity to heap praise on your community blood provider, EL PASO UNITED BLOOD SERVICES. It is estimated that 60% of the population will need blood or blood components sometime in their lifetime. Only one in twenty people regularly donate blood. As your only community blood provider, UBS, makes sure blood and blood products are available for whoever and whenever it is required! Of note, Ft Bliss has a separate blood bank but the El Paso UBS is their back up.

It requires about 30 to 45 minutes of your time to give a blood donation. . It can take up to 48 hours to process and prepare blood for use. The new automatic pump procedure service allows the collection of twice as much of a specific product: platelets, red cell or plasma which can decrease the risk of transfusion reaction by less patient exposure to multiple donors. In addition, the incidence of post donor reactions such as syncope has decreased with this new technology.

Donors are actively sought 7 days a week and the collections go on 7 days a week. The daily goal of 150 donations a day is required. This amounts to 46,000 donations a year just to meet area demands. UBS serves 18 hospitals in El Paso and southern New Mexico region. Volunteers freely donate the blood but there is expenditure to collect, test, process and deliver the supplies. The fee is charged at the hospital when ordered by the physician for transfusion or infusion.

Our blood supply has never been safer by thorough screening of donors and detailed sophisticated testing: every unit is checked for HIV, Hepatitis B and C, Chaga's disease, Lues' disease and other infectious diseases like West Nile Virus. It is important to tell our patients that they need to donate and you cannot catch HIV by giving blood! I cannot tell you all how often I hear that as a reason not to donate or they are afraid of needles.

As a physician who has written many patient orders to transfuse patients, I believe it is essential to help replace the supply. I personally have donated 25 plus units of my own vital life force. By giving blood 3 or 4 times a year, you can assure blood and blood products will be available for your patients. I would encourage all El Paso Physicians to lead by example with active regular dona-

tions and promote our (healthy) patients to do so. Contact United Blood Services at (915) 544-5422 to arrange your donation today or you can visit their web site: [www.unitedbloodservices.org](http://www.unitedbloodservices.org)

Blood donors are heroes to those in need. BE A HERO!

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