



# President's Comment

**Jose Aun, M.D.**

*President*

*El Paso County Medical Society*



I am writing this Presidents message just returning from Austin after participating in First Tuesdays at the Capitol. We actively lobbied with the House and Senate members from the El Paso delegation. After arriving, we were informed that HB 1 had just been passed on Sunday April 3. In this budget, there is a ten percent cut in Medicaid payments to physicians. We informed our delegation as to the dire impact that this cut would have on our community. Access to physicians for Medicaid participants would be limited. Local taxpayers will be stuck picking up the tab for the care of these patients, however at a much higher price. Medicines message seems to be getting through. The Senate Finance Committee recently approved significant improvements to Senate Bill 1. In this version, the State will use up to \$6 Billion of the rainy day funds to offset the budget shortfall that have been projected. This version would only have a ONE percent cut in Medicaid payments to physicians. These changes will help the state protect its basic health care infrastructure to ensure all Texans can get the care they need. More work still needs to be done, though, to ensure the final budget in not pennywise but pound foolish.

We also lobbied for the continuation of the Women's Health Program, the community based mental health care, substance abuse treatment programs, and HIV/AIDS medications. By having a viable Medicaid and CHIP physicians network, these programs have been shown to reduce costs for the state by ensuring that more care is provided in Physician's offices instead of a costly hospital or emergency room. By late April, we will know the outcome of the state budget in the legislature. The two versions will go to conference committee and a compromise version will be worked out. The Texas Medical Association will continue to actively lobby on behalf of physicians to ensure the best possible outcome. I would like to personally thank the physicians that made the trip to Austin: Dr. Luis Urrea, Dr. Craig Cameron, Dr. Manuel Acosta, Dr. David Palafox, and Dr. Richard Brower. Dr. Palafox also served as physician of the day in the Capitol. We were also joined for the first time by six medical students from the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine. I hope that they had an informative and educational experience and look forward to making this a yearly tradition. I would also like to thank Patsy Slaughter for all the hard work and dedication to the medical society. Thanks to all her efforts, we were able to meet with all of our Representatives and Senators. I look forward to working hard on behalf of the medical society and to keep the membership informed of all important issues.

---

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

## First Tuesdays at the Capitol



*L to R: Dr. Jose Aun, Dr. Manuel L. Acosta, Representative Joe Pickett, Dr. Craig D. Cameron, and Dr. Luis H. Urrea II.*



*L to R: Dr. Jose Aun, Dr. Craig D. Cameron, Chief of Staff Haley Greer (Representative Marisa Marquez), Dr. Manuel L. Acosta, and Dr. Luis H. Urrea II.*