We are in the midst of a humanitarian challenge with the ongoing influx of hundreds of immigrants to El Paso. Since June of 2014, several hundred people have arrived and have been processed by the border patrol. They consist of families with young children, adults, and teenagers travelling alone. Their countries of origin include El Salvador, Honduras, and other Central American countries. It has been reported they mostly made their way to the border in the Lower Rio Grande Valley by train after a rigorous and dangerous journey. Some with families in the United States have been released on their own recognizance to present themselves for immigration hearings at a future date. Others, with no families to claim are being indefinitely detained for future court appearance in El Paso, nearby Artesia, New Mexico or elsewhere around the country.

In June and July, several flights with as many as 140 people arrived daily that were processed by the border patrol here in the El Paso Sector. In several instances, these individuals have presented with medical issues that required professional attention. In coordination with the Border Regional Advisory Council (BAC) and the medical reserve corps, member physicians of the El Paso County Medical Society volunteered their time to assist the Emergency medical technicians (EMT’s) and registered nurses (RN’s) in providing necessary medical evaluations and medical treatment when appropriate. A few required referral to local emergency departments but for the most part treatments were rendered on site.

Furthermore, member physicians of the Society agreed to be "on call" to provide medical screening and care as deemed necessary for any unanticipated arrivals. As president of the El Paso County Medical Society, I would like to acknowledge those individuals who volunteered their time to assist in this critical time of need.

In August, I had the opportunity to travel to Washington, DC and participate in a panel discussion at the Border Health Caucus with regards to this unfolding crisis. I relayed our concerns to our elected representatives during our “hill visits” as well. We requested additional resources be provided to our region so that we can continue to assist in providing for the medical needs of the new arrivals. Furthermore, action must be taken to stem the tide of people who are risking injury or their lives to come here with the belief that they will be provided permanent refuge.