As we begin a new year, we face continued challenges in our practice of medicine. The perennial SGR formula in April will again result in significant reduced Medicare reimbursement if a permanent fix is not passed. In October, the once delayed implementation of ICD 10 is set to begin unless we can persuade the administration to postpone it again. Additional meaningful use requirement for Electronic Health Records (EHR) continue to create costly and time consuming delays in our ability to provide effective patient care. Organized medicine has and will continue to educate our elected representatives to provide some relief from these burdensome changes.

In Texas, I wanted to inform the medical community of coming changes with so called dual-eligible patients. These are patients with Medicare and Medicaid of which there are a significant number in El Paso County. Beginning in March 2015, the Texas dual-eligible demonstration will commence in El Paso, Dallas, Tarrant, Harris, Bexar, Hidalgo (lower valley), and Harris Counties. A Federal-State partnership between the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) was created with the goal to better serve individuals eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. The goal of the initiative is to bring about a new payment and service delivery model to improve coordination of services for dual eligible patients. Ultimately, the result planned is enhanced quality of care, and reduce costs for both the state and federal government. The mechanism will be a fully integrated managed care model using the existing health plans in the area. In the El Paso market, these will be Molina Health Care and Amerigroup. These health plans will create a single point of accountability for the delivery, coordination, and management of Medicare and Medicaid services. Physicians will be required to negotiate rates of payments with the health plans and obtain approval for outpatient diagnostic testing and imaging studies with Med Solutions.

The eligible population includes patients who are 21 or older and get Medicare part A, B, and D and are receiving full Medicaid benefits. Excluded population are dual eligible children (under age 21) who and have chosen to receive their Medicaid services through the STAR+PLUS managed care program. Also excluded are individuals with intellectual disabilities (IDD) population in STAR+PLUS for acute care services. Enrollment for most eligible individuals will be carried out via a passive enrollment process with the opportunity to opt out. Additionally, patient will be eligible if they are on a Medicare Advantage plan not operated by a health plan participating in the demonstration. The enrollment process will include:

1. Welcome letter 90 days prior to the start date.
2. Notification of enrollment and the choice to opt out of the demonstration (60 and 30 days prior to the start date).
3. The option to opt in or out on a monthly basis.

To enroll or disenroll, members can call the Medicaid Enrollment Broker or Medicare.

Lastly, I would encourage all El Paso physicians to become more active in your El Paso County Medical Society and the Texas Medical Association. It is critical for us to be unified and present one voice in order to effect positive changes in our chosen profession.

It has been an honor and privilege to have served all of you as 2014 President of the El Paso County Medical Society. Thank you for your support.
The retreat prepared TMA and state specialty societies for the thorny issues that await in the 2015 Texas Legislature and U.S. Congress.

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**THE FAMILY DOC**
Becky B. Personett, M.D.
Family Practice
4421 Edgar Park Ave.
El Paso, TX 79904
(915) 757-2974

December 2, 2014

El Paso County Medical Society
1301 Montana Avenue
El Paso, TX 79902-5530

Attn: Patsy Slaughter

We want to say THANK YOU for allowing physicians and their families to use the Turner Home porch and lawn during the Thanksgiving Day Parade. It is a great place to watch the parade, as well as to greet fellow-physicians.

The policeman on duty was kind, courteous and professional in his interactions with us and with various other parade viewers. His presence was appreciated.

Again, thank you for the arrangement.

Sincerely,

Dr. Personett’s office