

TSGE Newsletter
November 2014

President's Message

Dear Friends and Colleagues: Happy holidays to everyone! Time flies when one is having fun and it is hard to believe 2014 is coming to an end. We wrapped up another very successful TSGE Annual Meeting held in beautiful Austin, TX. Our program directors, Dr. Binh Pham and Dr. Daniel Emmett, and the TSGE education committee did a wonderful job to put together a national level meeting, which was well received. Thanks again to our program directors, all the speakers and our staff for their hard work.

Texas Legislative Update

by Greg Herzog and H. Gagneja. I would like to thank Greg Herzog, TSGE Legislative Consultant, for keeping us abreast of legislative and regulatory issues both on a state and national level. We are gearing towards another busy session in 2015 and Greg's input will be very important.

The 2014 general election has concluded and for the first time in over a decade, the Texas Legislature will convene with new leadership in every position elected at a statewide level. Governor-elect Greg Abbott, Lieutenant Governor-elect Dan Patrick, and Attorney General-elect Ken Paxton will be major players in healthcare policy this session. Additionally, the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services will have a new Chairman, Charles Schwertner, MD (R-Georgetown). Sen. Schwertner replaces Sen. Jane Nelson who has been tapped to lead the Senate Finance Committee.

With that being said, legislators have already begun pre-filing bills for next session. You can search and track any legislation here at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>

Texas enters the 84th Legislative Session in great fiscal shape. The Texas economy and oil and gas production have left state coffers flush. Big challenges, however, await state leaders. Transportation and water issues will require significant effort and funding. Also, the Texas Supreme Court is reviewing the constitutionality of how the state funds its public education system. Complicating these needs are campaign promises of the newly elected. See this link for more details
<http://www.myfoxhouston.com/story/27297216/post-election-tax-relief-in-the-works>

Healthcare issues at the Texas Legislature only seem to be mounting. Among the many health related issues expected to be discussed:

- **Requiring Physicians to Post Prices/Estimates for patients** (TMA Led Proposal): <http://www.texmed.org/Template.aspx?id=30971&terms=bonnen>
- **Attempts to Ban Out of Network Balanced Billing** and require physicians to attend mediation: <http://www.tahp.org/press-releases/305-tahp-call-for-reforms-on-health-care-billing>
- **Changing End-of-Life standards:** <http://www.kvue.com/story/news/state/2014/11/17/fort-worth-end-of-life-case-may-weigh-on-legislature/19163363/>
- **Ubiquitous Scope of Practice Attacks** including the Sunset Commission's call to remove Chiropractor's ability to perform school physicals: http://www.chirotexas.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=492:sunset-commission-votes-to-recommend-that-chiropractors-be-removed-from-performing-school-physicals&catid=20:site-content
- **Residency Program slots updated at long last?** Will this be the year that state funds residency slots to match the growth of population?

Your TSGE leadership will be monitoring these and other bills for impact and will be hard at work. IF THERE IS ONE THING YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR PROFESSION, IT WOULD BE MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH YOUR LAWMAKERS NOW, SO THAT WHEN THE TIME COMES DURING THE SESSION, THEY WOULD KNOW YOUR NAME.

Finally, I want to encourage all TSGE members to get involved and mark the following “TMA First Tuesdays at the Capital” dates on your calendar for 2015: February 3rd, March 3rd, April 7th, and May 5th. I encourage you to consider taking a day away from your practice and advocating for your patients.

Although the Texas Legislature is becoming more hyper-partisan and hyper-political, TSGE will be working with TMA to continually work for what’s best for patients and their physicians.

Medicine’s 2015 legislative agenda, based on TMA’s Healthy Vision 2020, second edition, will focus on:

- Protecting the patient-physician relationship from outside interference
- Making sure Texas physicians are paid appropriately for their work
- Ensuring the highest quality of care for patients
- Strengthening the clinical judgment of physicians against corporate influences
- Improving the state’s public health infrastructure, particularly Texas ability to respond in a crisis (like a hurricane or the 2014 Ebola outbreak)
- Supporting physician-led teams to provide and coordinate health care services
- Maintaining Texas’ strong medical liability reforms

See more at: <http://www.texmed.org/firsttuesdays/#sthash.A5AD3Ddq.dpuf>

Key Provisions in the CY 2015 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule

Physician payment update: There will be 0% update for gastroenterology pending SGR revision. Delay in the revision of colonoscopy, the 2015 PFS final rule had significant changes, the most important of which for GI was the delay of the revaluation of colonoscopy and the lower GI endoscopy codes. I encourage you to read the update provided by the national societies.

TSGE Leadership

I would personally like to extend a warm welcome to our new TSGE board members. These include: Binh Pham, MD, Valeska Balderas, MD, Jeffrey Lee, MD, Waqar Qureshi, MD, and Bruce Gibson, MD. Thank you for your time and service in the years to come.

As their terms as board members have come to an end, I would personally like to thank the following for their service over the years: Craig Johnson, MD, Alejandro Pruitt, MD, G. Nicholas Verne, MD and Josie Williams, MD. Thank you all!

2015 Membership Dues

Remember, the 2015 membership dues are due at the end of the year. The TSGE leadership has attempted to keep dues as low as possible while supporting our Annual meeting and lobbying efforts on your behalf. Please make sure that you pay your dues as soon as you can. Please encourage your midlevels to join as associate members as well. You can pay your dues online at <http://www.tsge.org>.

2015 TSGE Meeting

I would like to remind everyone about the 2015 TSGE Annual Conference in Fort Worth at the Omni Fort Worth Hotel, September 18-20. Here is one of the reviews from trip advisor, [“Fort Worth is a great town and the Omni is a gem in that town.”](#) The National Liver conference (NLC) will be a part of the program this year as well. Your program directors, R. Putcha, MD, Joe Shelton, MD, Josh George, MD and the TSGE education committee are already hard at work planning for next years’ program.

Finally, please do not hesitate to let us know how we can help you. Encourage your colleagues who might not yet be members to join TSGE and I hope to see you in Austin for the First Tuesday at the Capital in February.

Harish K. Gagneja, MD, FACG, AGAF, FASGE
TSGE President

If you have any questions or concerns, call our administrative office at 512-370-1626 or please e-mail Ky Camero at Ky.Camero@texmed.org.

Thank you to the following companies for sponsoring the 2014 TSGE Conference: Boston Scientific, Olympus, Salix, Audio Digest, Abbvie, ConMed and Gilead.