

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Although the weather hasn't quite caught up, autumn has descended on Texas and 2016 seems to be racing by! I would once again like to thank Dr. Harish Gagneja for his stellar leadership as TSGE President the past two years—the shoes I have to fill are quite large! I would also like to thank Drs. Jeffrey Lee and Ben Havemann, co-program directors, for a fantastic program at this year's annual meeting in Austin.

At this time, I would like to recognize two members of our organization that have recently passed away: Ralph F. Wells, MD (San Antonio) and Monte Allen, DO (Laredo). Both were long time members of TSGE.

Between our recent presidential election, the MACRA announcement earlier this fall and various legislative initiatives on the state level, the political environment facing our specialty and the House of Medicine is challenging and complex. As the 2017 Texas Legislative session approaches, I want to brief you on several issues your society will be tracking closely.

-Several states across the country have passed legislation prohibiting physicians' ability to balance bill for services provided to out-of-network patients. This topic has been much discussed in the Texas Legislature and we expect several versions of legislation to be introduced on this topic. The TSGE Board remains concerned about your ability to be paid for services you provide as well your future ability to negotiate with health plans. This will be a hot topic.

-This session brings the next step in the process known as "Sunset" for the Texas Medical Board. The Legislature must reauthorize the TMB by passing legislation. This legislation will be subject to amendment, which leads to concerns about scope of practice changes, the very definition of the practice of medicine, or any number of unforeseen changes to our profession. Stay tuned.

-TSGE will also be pushing for legislation this session to prohibit any requirement by health plans, hospitals, or the TMB with regard to the ABIM's Maintenance of Certification (MOC). This effort will mirror similar legislation passed last year in Oklahoma.

As your President, I encourage you to reach out to local candidates by inviting them to your clinics or hosting them for coffees. Our ability to share the stories of our patients and the work our profession is doing in the community is our greatest resource. Be a key contact and voice for TSGE!

Finally, don't forget to pay your 2017 dues. Dues notices have already gone out and we would like to see a 100% renewal for 2017. You can pay your dues online by logging on to [www.tsge.org](http://www.tsge.org) and paying with a credit card or by calling the TSGE office at 512.370.1533. If you know of somebody who is not member of TSGE, get them involved too!!

There are many reasons to join--personally and professionally. TSGE gives you the opportunity to receive quality education along with CME at the Annual Program. It gives you representation at the state capital and with national organizations. TSGE also gives you the opportunity to network and share information with other gastroenterologists. Each member is an essential part to the success of TSGE—one united voice for gastroenterology.

Encourage your colleagues who might not yet be members to join TSGE.

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](mailto:Ky.Camero@texmed.org).

**Jay N. Yepuri, MD, MS**  
**TSGE President**