

medicine minute

May 20, 2025

kudos

2025

Graduation & Awards

Trainees, Faculty Receive Awards at Residency Graduation Event

Seventy-six trainees celebrated the completion of their residency programs at the 2025 Graduation and Awards event on May 17. The following residents, fellows, and faculty members also received awards:

- Nidish Lokesh, M.D., and Adam Saleh, M.D. – Clerkship Teaching Award, R1
- Abel de Castro, MD, Daniel Feuer, M.D., and Diego Santinelli Pestana, M.D. – Clerkship Teaching Award, R2
- Blake Lackey, M.D., and Marissa Peyer, M.D. – Clerkship Teaching Award, R3
- Adan (Adam) Mora, M.D. – Outstanding Research Mentor
- Christopher Grubb, M.D. – Outstanding Teaching by a Fellow
- Carlos Cardenas, M.D. – Outstanding Teaching by a Faculty Member
- Matthew Sawyer, M.D. – Lorraine Sulkin-Schein Resident Award in Geriatric Medicine
- Joseph Kassab, M.D. – Donald W. Seldin Award in Internal Medicine for Outstanding Intern
- Patrick O'Hara, M.D. – Ellwood Jones Award in Internal medicine for Outstanding Senior Resident
- Kristina Collins, M.B.B.S. – John S. Miller Award for Outstanding Senior Resident
- Diana De Oliveira Gomes, M.D. – Best Article by a Categorical Resident

To view pictorial tributes to each of the graduating residents, by firm, click links below. ■

Firm A

Firm B

Firm C

Firm D

Firm E



Tessier Elected Fellow in the Surgical Infection Society

Jeffrey Tessier, M.D., a Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases & Geographic Medicine, has been elected to fellowship in the Surgical Infection Society, making him only the second infectious disease physician to earn this distinction after E. Patchen Dellinger, M.D., a Professor Emeritus of Surgery at the University of Washington.

Dr. Tessier is currently the only practicing infectious disease physician in the world to be designated a fellow in the society.

Dr. Tessier earned his medical degree at the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Medicine. He completed internal medicine residency training at the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, followed by an additional year as Chief Resident and a staff appointment as an internist and associate program director.

He was transferred to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda (now the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center) just prior to the events of September 11, 2001, and the anthrax bioterrorism attacks. He left active duty to receive advanced training in infectious diseases through a fellowship at the University of Virginia. During and after his clinical fellowship, he conducted a research fellowship on the role of bacterial protein toxins in the pathogenesis of anthrax, a disease he became interested in due to his experiences in the Navy.

Prior to joining the UT Southwestern faculty in 2018, Dr. Tessier served as director of antimicrobial stewardship and as a transplant infectious diseases consultant for John Peter Smith Health System in Fort Worth. ■



Okwara, Uzendu Urge Development of National SCA Database to Protect Young Athletes

Jeomi Okwara, M.D., and Anezi Uzendu, M.D., both Assistant Professors in the Division of Cardiology, recently published an [editorial in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*](#) calling for a nationwide database to track sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), the leading cause of death among young competitive athletes.

“Although recent data demonstrate encouraging survival trends, unsettling disparities persist, despite glaring opportunities to improve outcomes within reach,” the authors write. But the U.S. lacks a robust data infrastructure, making it difficult to assess SCA in athletes as well as treatment and outcomes to support research and quality improvement.

Creating a nationwide database capturing the factors and circumstances surrounding SCA incidents “would provide critical insights to truly understand the scope of this problem and identify modifiable factors to intervene upon,” the authors say. They also call for resource allocation to assist in creating emergency action plans and purchasing automated external defibrillators in eligible educational institutions. ■

research roundup

Male Volunteers Needed to for Chronic Weight Management Study

Endocrine researchers are involved in a clinical trial exploring a potential medication to determine whether it might help people lose and manage their weight.

“Obesity is a chronic and complex disease which can have serious negative health consequences, both in the short and long term,” says Ildiko Lingvay, M.D., M.P.H., M.S.C.S., a Professor in the Division of Endocrinology and a site investigator. “Discovering new medicines can help the long-term treatment for people with excess weight concerns, in addition to providing better quality of life.”

Male volunteers are needed to help determine the safety and effectiveness of the investigational medicine during the six-month trial. To qualify, they must be at least 18 years of age, have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more, and not have diabetes. A total of 14 appointments will be scheduled, including telephone and in-person visits. Participants will receive dietitian counseling, an approved weight-loss injectable drug, and compensation for time and effort. ■

If interested in participating, contact [Jeyna Blakely](#), a Clinical Research Coordinator in the Division of Endocrinology.

Kidney Cancer Program Announces Intramural Grant Competition

The Kidney Cancer Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) is again sponsoring an [intramural competition](#) for three to six grants of \$25,000 to \$40,000 (direct costs) as part of its Developmental Research and Career Enhancement programs.

The **Developmental Research Program** supports high-risk/high-payoff projects and projects with a translational projection. The **Career Enhancement Program** supports pilot projects from junior faculty, as well as established investigators refocusing their careers to include kidney cancer research.

Women and under-represented minority faculty are strongly encouraged to apply.

James Brugarolas, M.D., Ph.D., a Professor in the Division of Hematology and Oncology and Director of the Kidney Cancer Program, and **Payal Kapur, M.D.**, a Professor of Pathology and Urology, are available to discuss potential projects.

Deadline for submission is **Friday, June 6**. Awardees will be notified in July. ■

For more information, contact Program Coordinator [Kathy Worland](#).

education and training

IMG Wellness Retreat Scheduled for June 9

The IMG Connect mentorship program will present a wellness retreat on **Monday, June 9, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Faculty Club**. The event, for residents and fellows who are International Medical Graduates (IMGs), will include opportunities to connect with IMG faculty members; a financial literacy session led by Jeff Steiner, D.O., M.B.A.; wellness activities hosted by the UT Southwestern Wellness Team; and complimentary food and drinks.

[Event Registration](#)

personnel updates



Lopez Joins Faculty Affairs Group

Maricela Lopez, B.S., has joined the Central Administration office as a Faculty Affairs Coordinator, in support of the divisions of Cardiology, Digestive and Liver Diseases, Exercise Environmental Medicine, Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine, Education Administration, the Moss Heart Center, and Vascular Medicine.

Originally from Dallas, Ms. Lopez holds a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Phoenix. She has served in several administrative roles since starting at UT Southwestern in 2013, culminating in her previous position as Program Coordinator in the Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center. ■

[Internal Medicine News Portal](#)

in case you missed it



Medical Students Receive Awards

The Medical School annually bestows awards to honor students who exhibit potential in their specialties or a commitment to public health and community service. Among the students receiving accolades this year, the following have chosen a career in internal medicine and excelled in the clerkship and other internal medicine electives (pictured clockwise, from upper left):

- **Joelle Abdallah, M.D.,** and **Bill Zhang, M.D.,** received the Hemphill-Gojer Award in Internal Medicine. This award was established by Ross H. and Anne Seymour Hemphill in honor of their son and daughter-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. Seymour Hemphill; their daughter and son-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. Bernard Gojer; and Anne Hemphill's parents, E. Clyde and Florine Allen Seymour. Drs. Hemphill and Gojer are UT Southwestern Medical School alumni.
- **Parker Davis, M.D.,** received the Eliot Goldings Award in Rheumatology. Presented to the most outstanding medical student in rheumatology, the Goldings Award is named for Dr. Eliot A. Goldings, a former faculty member in the Division of Rheumatic Diseases who died in 1988.
- **Josh Choe, M.D.,** and **Alyssa Salinas, M.D.,** received the Lorraine Sulkin-Schein Medical Student Award in Geriatric Medicine. The award is named in honor of Mrs. Schein, a longtime supporter of UT Southwestern who bequeathed funds to promote geriatrics as a career path for medical students. She died in 2007 at the age of 89.
- **Prajwal Gowda, M.D., Gretchen Hoyer, M.D., Maraki Samuel, M.D.,** and **Giselle Uwera, M.D.,** received the Dr. Richard Mays Smith Award. This award is given annually to medical students who excel academically during clinical rotations and exhibit an interest in and compassion for patients. [Dr. Gowda also received the Ho Din Award](#), the highest medical student honor given at UT Southwestern. Established in 1943, the award is bestowed annually by Southwestern Medical Foundation.
- **Meena Tadros, M.D.,** received the Herbert S. Salomon, M.D., Class of 1967, Memorial Scholarship Award. This award recognizes a medical student who demonstrates excellence in internal medicine. It is named after Dr. Herbert Salomon, earned his medical degree from UT Southwestern in 1967 and completed a partial residency at Parkland Hospital. He died of a rare form of cancer on February 14, 1971, at the age of 30. ■

To read about these and other medical student award recipients, click [here](#).

News and Digital Media Featuring Internal Medicine Colleagues

- [UTSW Certified as a Comprehensive Cardiac Center](#) (Via UTSW Newsroom, with James de Lemos, M.D.)
- [Young Newlywed, UTSW Cancer Team Wage 'Infinity War' on Stage 4 Lymphoma](#) (Via MedBlog, with Farrukh Awan, M.D.)

need to know



MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER & HONOR

Clinics, Academic Offices, and Labs Closed on Monday, May 26

Memorial Day, **May 26**, is a designated holiday for UT Southwestern as we remember and honor those who gave their lives in service to our nation.

All UT Southwestern clinics, central administration, academic offices, and research labs will be closed. Hospitals will be fully operational with the appropriate staff in support areas.

Note: Due to the holiday weekend, there will be no Internal Medicine Grand Rounds on Friday, May 23. ■

If you have questions about the holiday policy, call Human Resources at 214-648-0821.

Nominations For Outstanding APPs Accepted Through June 27

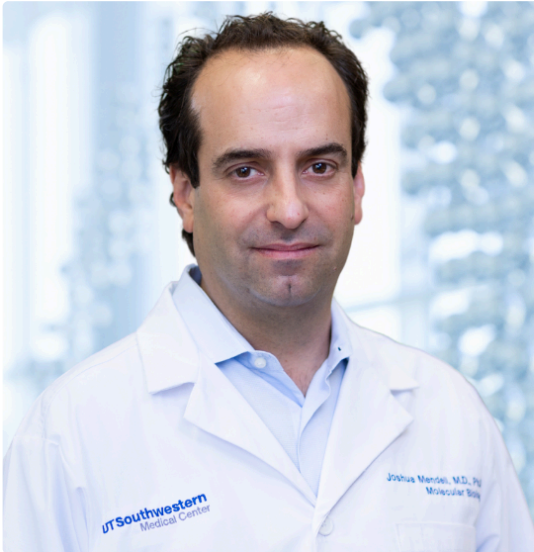
To honor the work and impact of Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) during Advanced Practice Providers Celebration Week in September, the Office of Advanced Practice Providers and the APP Recognition Subcommittee will accept nominations for six UT Southwestern-employed APPs who consistently go above and beyond in their roles, demonstrating excellence in the following categories:

- Teaching
- Ambulatory Practice
- Inpatient Clinical Practice
- Leadership
- Professional & Community Service
- Scholarly Endeavors

Additionally, an APP Champion of the Year will also be selected from among faculty and staff nominees. ■

Nominations will be accepted through June 27. To submit a nomination, click [here](#).

this week



Mendell to Discuss Coding and Noncoding RNAs on May 23

Joshua Mendell, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Vice Chair of Molecular Biology and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, will present the [Internal Medicine Research Conference](#) on Friday, May 23, at noon in D1.502. His topic: "Regulation of Coding and Noncoding RNAs in Health and Disease."

Dr. Mendell holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Cornell University, where he graduated *cum laude*. He earned his doctoral degree in human genetics and molecular biology from Johns Hopkins University, where he also received his medical degree. He then completed postdoctoral fellowship training in the Harry Dietz Laboratory.

Dr. Mendell joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 2011, after serving on the faculty at Johns Hopkins.

The [Mendell Laboratory](#) investigates fundamental aspects of post-transcriptional gene regulation, noncoding RNA regulation and function, and the roles of these pathways in normal physiology, cancer, and other diseases. ■

Other Noteworthy Lectures & Conferences This Week

- Tuesday, May 20, Noon: [Hematology & Oncology Faculty Recruitment Seminar](#) with Dr. Mariam El-Ashmawy (Columbia University) – "Transplant-Associated Skin Cancer: A Translational Research Journey"
- Tuesday, May 20, Noon: [Psychiatry Sub-Specialty Presentation](#) with Dr. Anupama Gangavati (Geriatric Medicine) – "To CBD or Not CBD in Older Adults: The Tale of the Cannabinoids"
- Wednesday, May 21, 8 a.m.: [Geriatrics Grand Rounds](#) with Dr. Abeera Azam (Geriatric Medicine) – "Role of Physical Therapy in Older People Living with Dementia"
- Friday, May 23, Noon: [Hematology & Oncology Grand Rounds](#) with Dr. Nicholas Levonyak (Hematology & Oncology) – "Updates in Management of Small Cell Lung Cancer"

correction

An announcement in the May 13 edition omitted the name and project title of an Internal Medicine recipient of the Thrive and Flourish Wellness Development Grant from the Office of Faculty Wellness. **Satyam Nayak, M.D.**, a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine, received a grant to support his project, "Parkland Games: Improving Community at Parkland."

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When we learn of a mistake, we acknowledge it with a correction. If you spot an error, please let us know at IMNews@UTSouthwestern.edu

Look for the next *Medicine Minute* on **Tuesday, May 27, 2025**.
Share feedback and news items with us at IMNews@UTSouthwestern.edu

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