

medicine minute

July 1, 2025

kudos



Kitchell Receives Service Award

Ellen Kitchell, M.D., an Associate Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine, has received the Steven Pace Life of Service Award from the AIDS Interfaith Network, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to serving individuals with chronic health conditions and providing prevention programs for at-risk communities. The award is named in honor of Steven Pace, the organization's president and CEO, in recognition of his four decades of service to the HIV community.

Dr. Kitchell serves as Medical Director of HIV Clinical Services at Parkland Health and also directs the HIV Fellowship and HIV curriculum series. Her research focuses on improving quality of care for people living with HIV, reducing hospital re-admissions, and expanding HIV testing. ■



Faculty Members Selected for LEVEL Up Second Cohort

Five faculty members from Internal Medicine have been selected for the second cohort to participate in LEVEL Up, an eight-session training program for faculty in mid-career leadership roles. Pictured above, from left:

- **Lesley Davila, M.D.**, Associate Professor in the Division of Rheumatology
- **Nikhil Munshi, M.D., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor in the Division of Cardiology and Associate Director of the Moss Heart Center
- **Hetal Patel, M.D.**, Associate Professor in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine and Program Director of the Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Fellowship
- **Abey Thomas, M.D.**, Associate Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine
- **Netanya Uday, M.D.**, Associate Professor and Clinical Chief in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine

The second cohort begins training in October. ■



Barker Elected Chair of SGIM's Board of Regional Leaders

Blake Barker, M.D., an Associate Professor in the William T. and Gay F. Solomon Division of General Internal Medicine and Associate Dean of Students, has been elected Chair of the Board of Regional Leaders for the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM), a professional organization with more than 3,300 academic general internists.

The board oversees programs within its six geographic regions to ensure the society's strategic goals and functions are effectively addressed.

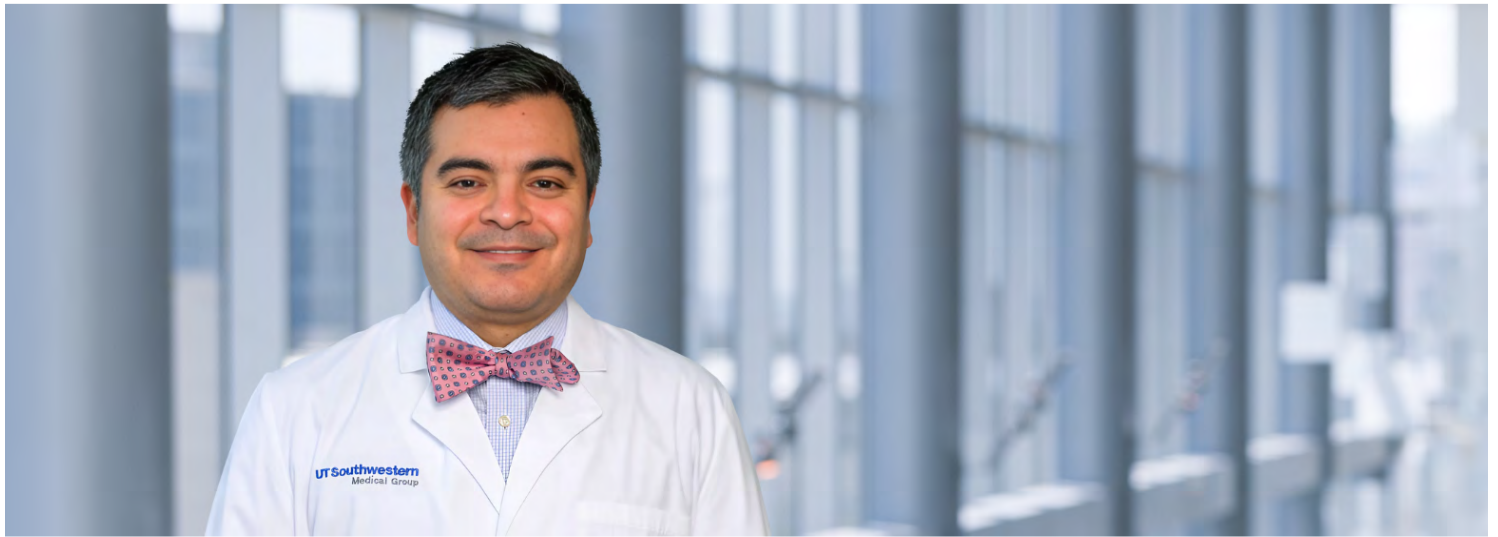
Dr. Barker joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 2011. He has been an active member of the SGIM since 2012, contributing numerous leadership roles within the Southern Region. ■

Staff Members Take on New Roles

We congratulate the following staff members who recently took on new positions within the Department:

- **Aishwarya Sannareddy** – Sr. Research Associate, Hematology & Oncology
- **Daisy Zambrana** – Clinical Research Coordinator II, Cardiology

research roundup



New Study Highlights Maribavir's Edge in Treating CMV in Transplant Patients

A recent subgroup analysis from the Phase 3 SOLSTICE trial, led by senior author **Ricardo La Hoz, M.D.**, has shown that the antiviral agent maribavir offers a more effective and safer alternative to standard therapies for treating cytomegalovirus (CMV) viremia in solid organ transplant (SOT) recipients.

CMV is a common virus that belongs to the herpesvirus family. Once a person is infected, the virus remains in the body for life in a dormant state. Maribavir works by inhibiting the CMV enzyme pUL97, which is essential for viral replication.

In the trial of 211 patients, maribavir demonstrated significantly higher CMV clearance rates at week 8 across kidney, lung, and heart transplant recipients compared to investigator-assigned therapy (IAT). Although both treatment arms had similar rates of sustained clearance and symptom control through week 16, maribavir was associated with far fewer treatment discontinuations due to adverse events (3.5% vs. 23.2%).

Importantly, no graft losses were reported, and acute rejection rates remained comparable between groups. These findings reinforce maribavir's favorable efficacy and safety profile for managing CMV infections in transplant patients. ■

[Click here to read the analysis in the Journal of Heart and Lung Transplant.](#)

Healthy Women Needed for Research Study

The Institute for Exercise and Environmental Medicine (IEEM), in collaboration with the Neurological Disorder Clinic, is seeking healthy women volunteers ages 18 to 40 for a research study on Postural Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) – a condition that can cause frequent dizziness and other symptoms. The study involves up to three visits and aims to better understand the underlying causes and subtypes of the condition through clinical and laboratory data.

Eligible participants must not experience lightheadedness when standing and must not be taking medications that could affect study results.

Participants will receive a free Fitbit activity tracker and \$200. ■

Internal Medicine News Portal

in case you missed it



Patel Uncovers RNA Pathway that Could Boost Kidney Health and Prevent Chronic Disease

Vishal Patel, M.D., a Professor in the Division of Nephrology, and colleagues have identified a key RNA methylation pathway that influences the formation of nephrons – the kidney's functional units. Published in [Nature Communications](#), the study reveals that the enzyme METTL3, which facilitates RNA methylation, acts as a sensor for S-adenosylmethionine (SAM) levels in stem cells. When SAM levels are high, METTL3 pushes these cells to develop into nephrons.

This discovery could pave the way for therapies aimed at increasing nephron numbers in individuals at risk of chronic kidney disease (CKD), particularly those born prematurely or with low birth weight. Experiments in mice showed that manipulating SAM and METTL3 levels during early development significantly altered nephron counts and kidney size. The findings suggest a potential strategy to prevent CKD by enhancing nephron endowment early in life. ■

Other researchers from the Division of Nephrology who contributed to this study are first author [Harini Ramalingam, Ph.D.](#), a former Instructor; [Thomas Carroll, M.D.](#), a Professor and Director of Basic Science Research; Assistant Professor [Ronak Lakhia, M.D.](#); Research Assistant [Jesus Alvarez, B.A.](#); Senior Research Associate [Patricia Cobo-Stark, A.B.](#); and Research Associate [Elyse Grilli, M.S.](#)

Dr. Patel holds the Yin Quan-Yuen Distinguished Professorship in Nephrology.

[Read the UT Southwestern press release.](#) To read the UT Southwestern press release, click [here](#).

News and Digital Media Featuring Internal Medicine Colleagues

- [Cognitive Impairment Common After Cardiogenic Shock, Study Shows](#) (via *UTSW Newsroom*, with James de Lemos, M.D., Eric Hall, M.D., Maryjane Farr, M.D., Amil Shah, M.D., Colby Ayers, M.S., and Alexandra Sykes, M.D.)
- [The Case for Prevention: A Conversation with ASPC Presidents Current & Past](#) (via *The Heart of Prevention* podcast, with Amit Khera, M.D., M.Sc.)

- [High Phosphate Diet Impacts Nervous System, Induces Hypertension](#) (via *UTSW Newsroom*, with Isabelle Carroll, B.S.; Teppei Fujikawa, Ph.D.; Ayumi Fukazawa, Ph.D.; Marco Galvan, B.S.; Laurent Gautron, Ph.D.; Han Kyul Kim, Ph.D.; Masaki Mizuno, Ph.D.; Orson Moe, M.D.; Johanne Pastor; Beverly Rothermel, Ph.D.; Scott Smith, Ph.D.; and Wanpen Vongpatanasin, M.D.)
- [Time in a Bottle: How UTSW Paved the Way for a Breakthrough Cancer Drug](#) (via *MedBlog*, with Elizabeth Maher, M.D., Ph.D.)

need to know



Clinics, Academic Offices, and Labs Closed on July 4

Independence Day, July 4, is a [designated holiday](#) for UT Southwestern in commemoration of the day in 1776 when the American colonies declared their independence from Great Britain.

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

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



Nominations Open for Leaders in Clinical Excellence Awards

The Leaders in Clinical Excellence Awards were established in 2018 to recognize clinical faculty for their exceptional contributions to patient care, education and training, and to UT Southwestern overall.

Individuals can be nominated who care for patients at Clements University Hospital, Zale Lipshy Pavilion, more than 80 clinics, and at our affiliated partners, Parkland Health, Children's Health, the VA North Texas Health Care System, and Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children.

All are welcome to submit a faculty member for consideration in any of seven categories, including UT Southwestern's highest clinical care honor, the Patricia and William L. Watson Jr., M.D. Award for Excellence in Clinical Medicine. ■

To submit a nomination by July 15, visit the [Clinical Faculty Awards website](#).

Nominate Someone Here

Look for the next *Medicine Minute* on **Tuesday, July 8, 2025**.

Share feedback and news items with us at IMNews@UTSouthwestern.edu

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