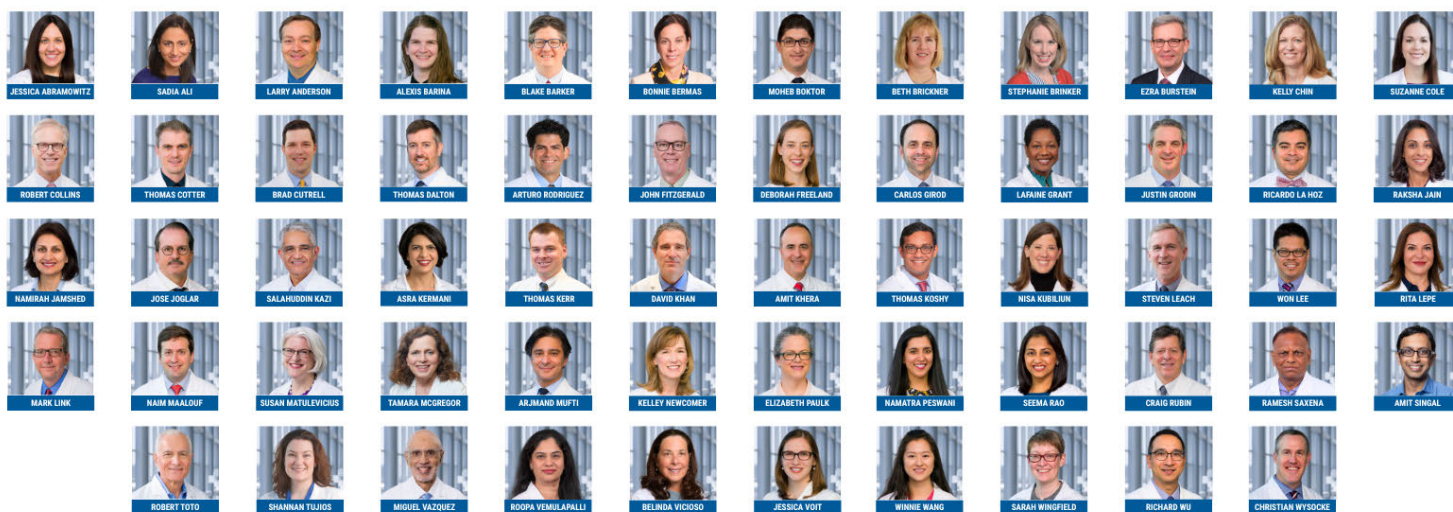


medicine minute

November 4, 2025

kudos



Annual List of Area's Best Doctors Includes 58 Internal Medicine Faculty

Each year, *D Magazine* highlights the region's best doctors as chosen by their peers. Votes are tallied and sorted by the magazine's editorial staff, with the remaining votes vetted by an anonymous panel of doctors.

This year, 258 UT Southwestern physicians were included among the most recommended providers, including 58 faculty members with primary or secondary appointments in Internal Medicine.

Only licensed, board-certified physicians may vote in the process, according to *D Magazine*. For a vote to be counted, ballots must include voter's Texas Medical License number. Each physician may nominate up to three doctors in each specialty. More than 6,000 clinicians submitted nominations, answering the question of whom they would want to take care of their loved ones who needed medical attention. ■

[See a Composite of Internal Medicine Faculty](#)



Parikh Chairs Historic Coalition of Kidney Organizations to Transform Research

The American Society of Nephrology has released “Transforming Kidney Health Research: A Research Agenda for the Future,” a landmark report calling for a \$1.8 billion annual investment from the federal government over the next decade to accelerate discovery, prevention, and cures for kidney diseases. These conditions affect 37 million Americans and cost the nation more than \$150 billion each year.

Launched in 2024, the Transforming Kidney Health Research (TKHR) initiative brought together scientists, clinicians, and patient advocates under a shared advocacy platform. Chaired by **Samir M. Parikh, M.D.**, a Professor and Chief of the Division of Nephrology, the panel collaborated with federal agencies and nonprofit partners to reimagine the nation’s kidney research ecosystem.

“Kidney diseases kill more Americans than most cancers yet receive only \$17 per patient annually in research funding,” Dr. Parikh says. “The TKHR report outlines strategies to improve early detection, advance gene and cell therapies, modernize dialysis, strengthen transplantation outcomes, and rebuild the research workforce.”

The initiative builds on the momentum of an Executive Order President Trump signed in his first term on Advancing American Kidney Health, Dr. Parikh adds, and offers a coordinated national strategy to prevent kidney failure and drive innovation.

“The path forward is well defined,” he says. “What is needed now is the resolve to act.” ■

[Access the Full Report](#)



Vemulapalli Selected for National Leadership Seminar

Roopa Vemulapalli, M.D., an Associate Professor in the Division of Digestive and Liver Diseases, Director of GI Services at Clements University Hospital, and Medical Director of the Digestive Diseases Clinic, has been accepted to participate in the Midcareer Faculty Leadership Development Seminar sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

This highly interactive three-day seminar is designed to equip midcareer faculty with the tools and strategies needed to advance as leaders in academic medicine and science. Through a blend of general sessions and personalized breakout groups, participants explore organizational leadership, career development, and strategic thinking tailored to their professional goals.

Dr. Vemulapalli's selection reflects her ongoing commitment to excellence in clinical care, education, and leadership. She will assume the role of Clinical Chief of Digestive and Liver Diseases in December. ■



Pandey Honored as Most Published Author by ACC Journal

Ambarish Pandey, M.D., M.S.C.S., an Associate Professor in the Division of Cardiology, has received the Most Published Author Award from the American College of Cardiology for his contributions to the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology: Heart Failure*. The award, presented by the American College of Cardiology, recognizes Dr. Pandey's contributions to advancing research in heart failure, particularly in the areas of prevention, frailty, and cardiometabolic health.

With more than 450 peer-reviewed publications to his name, Dr. Pandey leads the Cardiometabolic Research Unit and serves as Medical Director of the Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction (HFpEF) program. His work continues to shape clinical practice and improve outcomes for patients with cardiovascular disease. ■



Galous Appointed to Planning Committee for Annual Rheumatology Meeting

Haidy Galous, M.D., an Assistant Professor in the Division of Rheumatic Diseases, has been selected to serve on the Planning Committee for the annual meeting of the American College of Rheumatology (ACR). ACR Convergence is the largest rheumatology conference in North America, drawing approximately 10,000 participants from around the world. The event provides a platform for scientists and clinicians to share research, abstracts, and clinical guidelines.

Dr. Galous contributed to creating, coordinating, and moderating scientific sessions during the 2025 ACR event in Chicago.

“I am honored to volunteer for the College and to have the opportunity to serve on the Planning Committee for this globally attended conference,” Dr. Galous says.

Originally from Egypt, Dr. Galous earned her medical degree at Ain Shams University Faculty of Medicine in Cairo, where she also completed internal medicine residency training. She performed a second residency in internal medicine at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, where she also received advanced training through a fellowship in rheumatology.

Dr. Galous joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 2021. ■

Staff Members Take on New Roles

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

- **Nahid Attar** – Temporary Staff Specialist, Digestive & Liver Diseases
- **Jennifer Araiza** – Sr. Administrative Associate, Hematology & Oncology
- **Courtnee Avery** – Clinical Research Assistant II, Cardiology
- **Marielle Berger-Nagele** – Manager of Clinical Research Office Operations, Endocrinology
- **William Brown** – GME Program Coordinator II, Cardiology
- **Melanie Chaponan** – Sr. Administrative Assistant II, Cardiology
- **Catherine Chukuka** – Advanced Practice Nurse, Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine
- **Karrie Currey** – Temporary Staff Associate, Cardiology
- **Julie Davis** – Administrative Associate, Department Administration
- **Laketra Davis** – Sr. Administrative Associate, Nephrology
- **Mariana Diaz** – Administrative Associate, Hospital Medicine
- **Christopher Garcia** – Department Operations Analyst, Department Administration
- **Laura Hansen** – Lead Clinical Research Coordinator, Infectious Diseases & Geographic Medicine
- **Chuan Ko** – Financial Analyst II, Hematology & Oncology
- **Maria Mcleod** – Research Nurse, Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine
- **Jacob Moore** – Research Assistant I, Center for Hypothalamic Research
- **Ashley Murillo** – Sr. Research Nurse, Cardiology
- **Zoe Pulitzer** – Clinical Research Coordinator II, Infectious Diseases & Geographic Medicine
- **Cristine Rodriguez** – Education Assistant, Hematology & Oncology
- **Satara Russell** – Chair Coordinator, Department Administration
- **Tia Sivilay** – Sr. Grants & Contracts Specialist, Research Administration
- **Dariel Solis** – Population Research Project Assistant I, Infectious Diseases & Geographic Medicine
- **Jose Tanon** – Sr. Administrative Assistant II, Infectious Diseases & Geographic Medicine
- **Julie Terrell** – Clinical Research Coordinator I, Digestive & Liver Diseases
- **Bruno Tome** – Financial Analyst II, Department Administration
- **Amit Verma** – Research Scientist, Digestive & Liver Diseases

research report



Tatara Leads Breakthrough in Vaccine Strategy to Protect Implanted Devices from Infection

Patients with orthopedic implants face a persistent risk of bacterial infection, often requiring revision surgeries, prolonged antibiotic treatment, or even amputation. Now, a new vaccine strategy, co-led by **Alexander Tatara, M.D., Ph.D.**, an Assistant Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine, offers hope for preventing these life-threatening complications.

In a [study published in PNAS](#), Dr. Tatara and colleagues developed an injectable biomaterial scaffold vaccine that dramatically reduces bacterial burden in a mouse model of orthopedic device infection. Developed in collaboration with researchers at Harvard's Wyss Institute and the Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the vaccines use immune-stimulating molecules and a diverse array of *Staphylococcus aureus* antigens to train the immune system more effectively than conventional soluble vaccines.

"Notably, the biomaterial vaccines protected against both methicillin-sensitive and methicillin-resistant strains of *S. aureus*, suggesting broad potential for future clinical use," says Dr. Tatara, who spearheaded the project during his fellowship at the Wyss Institute. "This portends a future where personalized biomaterial vaccines could be tailored to individual patients ahead of surgery, offering a powerful new tool to safeguard implanted medical devices." ■

Internal Medicine News Portal

in case you missed it

News and Digital Media Featuring Internal Medicine Colleagues

- [PREVUE-VALVE Charts the Prevalence of Valve disease in the United States](#) (via TCDMD, with Dharam Kumbhani, M.D.)
- [Longtime Clinical Operations VP Rutherford Appointed Professor Emeritus](#) (via *Center Times+*, with John Rutherford, M.D., and Craig Glazer, M.D.)
- [One Complex Lung Surgery Makes a Lifetime of Difference](#) (via *MedBlog*, with Sonja Bartolome, M.D.)

this week



UCLA's Jake Lusis to Present Moss Heart Center Seminar on Heart Failure and Genetics

Aldons Jake Lusis, Ph.D., a Professor of Medicine, Microbiology, and Human Genetics at the University of California Los Angeles, will present the [Moss Heart Center Seminar](#) on Thursday, Nov. 6 at noon in NA6.212. His topic: "Tissue-Tissue Crosstalk in Heart Failure: A Genetics Approach."

Dr. Lusis holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Washington State University and a doctorate in biophysics from Oregon State University. He conducted postdoctoral research in molecular genetics at Roswell Park Memorial Institute, where he was mentored by Kenneth Paigen, Ph.D.

Dr. Lusis is internationally recognized for his pioneering work in metabolism and growth regulation, with a particular focus on fatty liver disease and its progression to liver cancer. A member of the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, he contributes to the Epigenomics, RNA and Gene Regulation research program. [His lab](#) investigates the molecular mechanisms underlying these conditions, including the role of the transcription factor Zfx2, which has been implicated in multiple cancers.

His research integrates multi-omics data and leverages genetically diverse mouse models to uncover insights into mitochondrial dysfunction, whole-body metabolism, and macrophage activation – phenotypes relevant to inflammation and cancer survival. ■



UCSF's Mark Anderson to Discuss Autoimmunity on Nov. 7

Mark S. Anderson, M.D., Ph.D., a Professor in the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism and Director of the Diabetes Center at the University of California San Francisco, will present the [Internal Medicine Grand Rounds](#) lecture on Friday, Nov. 7, at 8 a.m. in D1.502. His topic: "Using Outliers to Unlock Autoimmunity."

Dr. Anderson holds a doctorate in immunology from the Pritzker School of Medicine at the University of Chicago, where he also completed his medical degree. He then obtained internal medicine residency training at the University of Minnesota, followed by a fellowship in endocrinology at Massachusetts General Hospital.

In his research, Dr. Anderson focuses on the genetic and molecular underpinnings of such autoimmune diseases as type 1 diabetes and Hashimoto's disease. His [lab group](#) has a particular interest in how T cells – white blood cells that mature in the thymus gland and play an important role in immune response – can provoke

autoimmunity. Dr. Anderson's major scientific contributions involve unraveling the mechanisms by which a key transcription factor called Aire promotes immune tolerance. He continues to make significant contributions in this area of research and has even developed translational approaches to his findings that involve manipulating this key tolerance mechanism.

As a leader in the translation of immunology to human health, Dr. Anderson is also Director of Immune Tolerance Network (ITN), a collaborative network for clinical research funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at NIH, a co-founder of ImmunoX, a novel program to harness the immune system for human health at UCSF.

As a practicing Diabetologist, he serves in an advisory capacity for the translation of immunology to autoimmunity, including service as a mechanistic investigator/advisor to Trialnet, an NIH-sponsored multicenter clinical trial consortium whose focus is on preventing and reversing type 1 diabetes.

A member of the National Academy of Medicine, Dr. Anderson received the William B. Coley Award for Distinguished Research in Basic and Tumor Immunology from the Cancer Research Institute in 2024. ■



Kong to Share Insights on Celiac Disease at Nov. 7 Research Conference

Xiao-Fei Kong, M.D., Ph.D., an Assistant Professor in the Division of Digestive and Liver Diseases, will present the [Internal Medicine Research Conference](#) on Friday, Nov. 7, at noon in D1.502. His topic: "Dissection the Population and Molecular Genetics of Celiac Disease."

Originally from China, Dr. Kong earned his medical degree at Yangzhou University Medical College in Jiangsu and completed a residency in internal medicine at Ruijin Hospital at Shanghai Jiaotong University. He then earned a doctoral degree in immunology and genetics from the Sorbonne University in Paris, France. He later earned a master's degree in translational medicine from the Rockefeller University in New York. He received additional internal medicine residency training at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, followed by advanced training through a fellowship in gastroenterology.

Dr. Kong joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 2022.

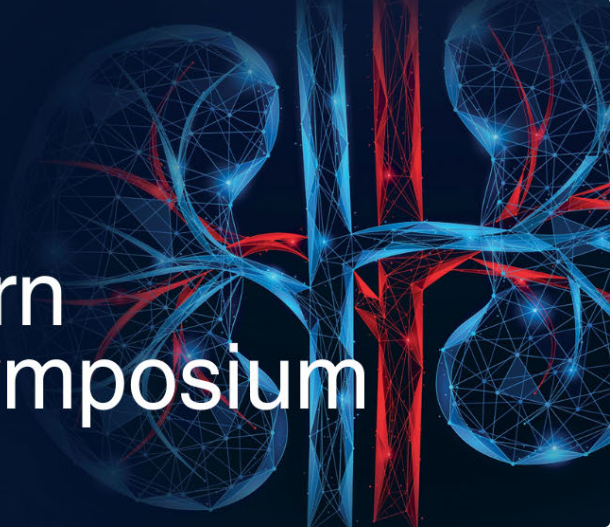
In his [research lab](#), Dr. Kong explores celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease, inborn errors of immunity, and rare liver diseases. His previous work led to the discovery of several new genetic diseases, including human SPPL2A deficiency, inherited STAT1 disorders and interferonopathy in Down Syndrome. ■

Other Upcoming Lectures & Conferences of Note

- Tuesday, Nov. 4, Noon: [Virtual Lunch & Learn](#) with Drs. Sheena Bhalla (Hematology & Oncology), Inderpal Sakaria (Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery), Ken Westover (Radiation Oncology), and Steven Wu (Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine) – "Evaluation and Treatment of Lung Nodules and Lung Cancer"
- Wednesday, Nov. 5, 8 a.m.: [Geriatrics Grand Rounds](#) with Dr. Amaka Opute (Geriatric Medicine) – "Balancing Safety and Pain Management in the Older Surgical Patient"
- Wednesday, Nov. 5, 4:30 p.m.: [Leaders in Clinical Excellence Awards](#) with Drs. Nicholas Hendren, Susan Matulevicius, and Melanie Sulistio (Cardiology)
- Thursday, Nov. 6, 8 a.m.: [Infectious Diseases Grand Rounds](#) with Drs. Vivek Beechar and Joslyn Strebe (Infectious Diseases & Geographic Medicine) – "From Conference to Clinic: Practical Takeaways from ID Week 2025"
- Thursday, Nov. 6, Noon: [Radiology Clinical Grand Rounds](#) with Dr. Dhiraj Baruah (Medical University of South Carolina) – "Photon Counting CT Applications in Cardiothoracic Imaging"

- Thursday, Nov. 6, 4 p.m.: [Pharmacology Seminar](#) with Dr. Boyuan Wang (Pharmacology) – “Surprising Properties of Wnt Interaction: Hotspots Revealed by Synthetic Peptides”
- Friday, Nov. 7, Noon: [Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center Distinguished Lecture](#) with Dr. Russell Jones (Van Andel Research Institute) – “Metabolic Control of Immune Checkpoints in Cancer”

reminders



2025 UT Southwestern Kidney Transplant Symposium

Thursday, Nov. 6

Annual Symposium to Include Updates on Kidney Transplant Care

UT Southwestern will host its seventh annual Kidney Transplant Symposium on **Thursday, Nov. 6, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. via Zoom**. The virtual event, designed for nurses, social workers, and other care team members involved in pre- and post-transplant care, will bring together leading experts to share the latest insights and innovations in kidney transplantation, including emerging trends, surgical advancements, and educational resources that support patient outcomes. Attendees will benefit from the expertise of UT Southwestern's nationally recognized transplant team, whose work continues to shape the future of kidney care through leading research and clinical excellence. ■

[Register for the Kidney Transplant Symposium](#)

on the horizon



INTERNAL MEDICINE Faculty Town Hall

Faculty Town Hall Scheduled for Nov. 13

A virtual Town Hall for Department faculty will be held at **noon on Thursday, Nov. 13, via Zoom.**

"This is a follow-up action item from our SCORE report that we presented to faculty at the September Forum," explains **Rachel Bonnema, M.D., M.S.**, a Professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Associate Vice Chair of Faculty Development. "This will be the second of multiple planned Town Halls this year to improve communication and hear about concerns from faculty."

During the event, Department leadership will present updates and respond to faculty concerns submitted in advance. ■

To submit a question or raise a concern for leadership to address, click [here](#).

Join the Town Hall on Zoom



Look for the next *Medicine Minute* on **Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2025.**

Want to access an item in a previous edition of the newsletter? [Check our *Medicine Minute* archive.](#)

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

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