

medicine minute

December 16, 2025

kudos



Cutrell Appointed Infectious Disease Section Chief for UTSW

James "Brad" Cutrell, M.D., a Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine, has been appointed Infectious Diseases (ID) Clinical Section Chief for the UT Southwestern Health System, succeeding **Jeffrey Tessier, M.D.**, who will be returning to active duty in the U.S. Navy in March.

As a member of the ID consultative service at Clements University Hospital and outpatient ID clinics, Dr. Cutrell has been recognized for his dedication and responsiveness to patient needs, often expanding his schedule to ensure timely care. He directs the CUH Antimicrobial Stewardship Program, which has earned Centers of Excellence status from the Infectious Diseases Society of America, underscoring its importance to patient safety and care quality. He also serves as Program Director for the Infectious Diseases Fellowship and Co-Director of the annual Update in Internal Medicine CME course.

In his new role, he will be responsible for the deployment of ID clinical faculty, ensuring wide availability of consultative services across the UT Southwestern campus, and coordinating the clinical and educational missions across the Health System.

"I am honored to lead the Infectious Diseases clinical service and continue advancing our ID care in partnership with the outstanding clinical faculty across our campus," Dr. Cutrell said. "Our ID teams bring great value to the care of our patients in the hospital and clinics, and we want to ensure that we can meet the needs for all of those who will benefit from our team's expertise and compassionate care. This role offers an exciting opportunity to advance our clinical, educational, and research missions within the UTSW Health System, ensuring excellence for our patients and community." ■



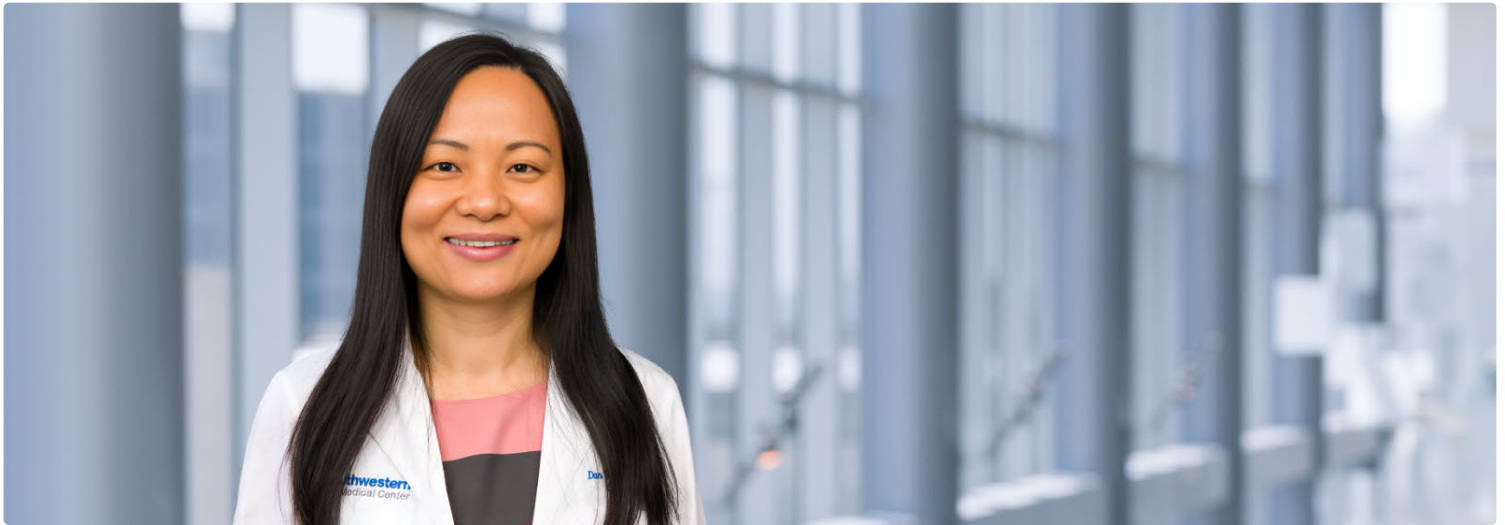
Mathis Appointed to Medical Society Board

Henriette Mathis, M.D., an Associate Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine and Medical Director of the Medicine Secure Unit at Parkland Health, has been appointed to a two-year term on the executive board of the C.V. Roman Medical Society, a local affiliate of the National Medical Association (NMA). Founded in 1895, the NMA is the nation's largest and oldest organization representing Black physicians and their patients. The mission of the C.V. Roman Medical Society is to advance the art and science of medicine for people of African descent via education, advocacy, and health policy to promote health and wellness, eliminate health disparities and access to care, and sustain physician liability.

Originally from Dallas, Dr. Mathis holds a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Southern Methodist University. She earned her medical degree at UT Southwestern and completed internal medicine residency training at the University of Washington Boise. She serves as Course Director of the Internal Medicine-Psychiatry Sub-internship for UT Southwestern Medical School.

Dr. Mathis joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 2014. ■

research report



Tong, Colleagues Create First Detailed Map of Heart's Lymphatic System

A research team led by **Dan "Amanda" Tong, M.D., Ph.D.**, an Assistant Professor in the Division of Cardiology, has created a detailed map of the lymphatic vessels in the heart, providing an important resource for understanding cardiovascular health and disease. Using advanced imaging techniques and a specialized mouse model, the team discovered an extensive network of lymphatic vessels on the heart's ventricles and in key areas near valves and the atrioventricular node.

"To achieve this, we combined genetic labeling with immunostaining, building on decades of research to accurately define lymphatic distribution in the adult mouse heart," Dr. Tong explained. "We also used integrated single-cell RNA sequencing to identify six distinct subtypes of lymphatic endothelial cells, offering new insight into the molecular complexity of the cardiac lymphatic system."

The [study, published in the American Journal of Physiology – Heart and Circulatory Physiology](#), revealed that commonly used markers, such as LYVE1 and PROX1, are not entirely specific because they are also expressed by non-lymphatic cells. This finding underscores the need to use multiple markers when identifying lymphatic vessels. By providing this comprehensive blueprint, the research sets the stage for future studies on how lymphatic remodeling affects heart disease and could lead to new strategies for improving cardiovascular health.

Other Internal Medicine contributors to this study include graduate student **Sarah Ware**; **Chitkale Hiremath, M.S.**, a Research Scientist in the Division of Nephrology; **Claudia Munoz Rodriguez, Ph.D.**, a Postdoctoral Researcher in the Division of Cardiology; **Shuyue Zhou, B.S.**, a Research Associate in the Division of Cardiology; and **Denise Marciano, M.D., Ph.D.**, an Associate Professor in the Division of Nephrology and Director of the Medical Scientist Training Program. ■

Dr. Marciano holds the Carolyn R. Bacon Distinguished Professorship in Medical Science and Education.

[Learn More About Dr. Tong's Research](#)

education and training



Global Health Pathway Expands Opportunities for Residents

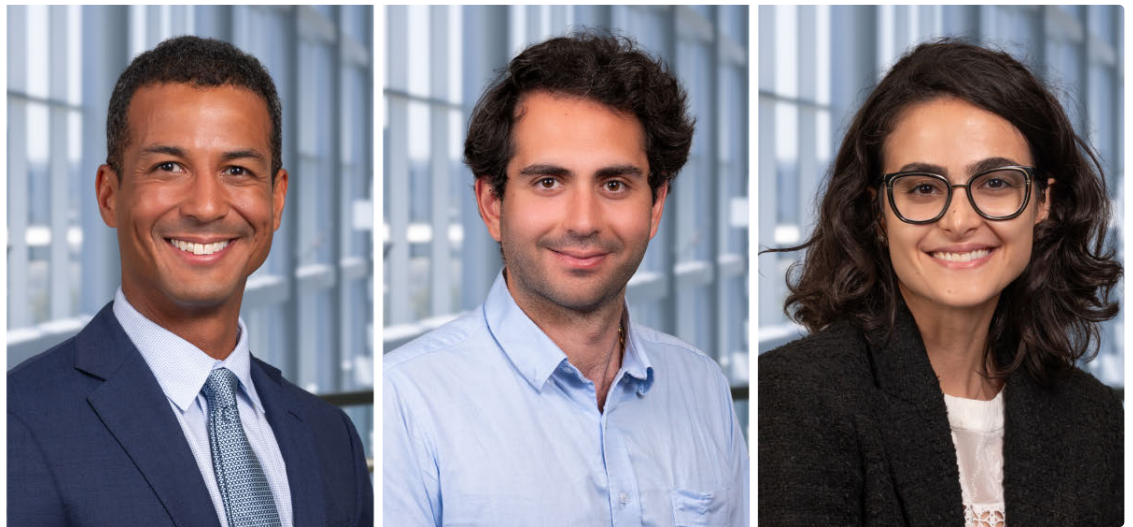
The Internal Medicine Residency program has launched a Global Health Pathway, designed to provide trainees a strong foundation in global health principles.

"The curriculum blends core topics, including ethics, cultural competency, and epidemiology, through both synchronous and asynchronous learning," said **Christiana Renner, M.D., M.S.**, an Associate Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine and Associate Program Director for the Internal Medicine Residency. "Currently, the Department supports two third-year residents and eight second-year residents in the pathway."

An agreement with the University of Zambia in Lusaka, arranged by **Fiona Strasserking, M.D.**, an Assistant Professor in the Division of Cardiology, and **Roger Bedimo, M.D.**, a Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine, will allow third-year residents **Yadonay Engeda, M.D.**, and **Justin Lagbo, M.D.**, to perform a clinical rotation there in early 2026.

Originally from Ethiopia, Dr. Engeda earned her medical degree at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Dr. Lagbo, whose hometown is Virginia Beach, earned his medical degree at Eastern Virginia Medical School.

Together with **Lavanya Dharmarajan, M.D.**, an Assistant Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine, Dr. Renner is also pursuing an agreement with the Chickasaw Nation in Ada, Oklahoma, to create additional rotation opportunities. ■



Residents Recognize Peers for Clinical Excellence, Leadership

Three Internal Medicine residents have been recognized by their peers as House Officers of Excellence for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Pictured from left: **Tyler “Benji” Benjamin, M.D.**, a first-year resident in the Community and Population Healthcare Track from Manchester, Tennessee, was honored for “exceptional clinical skills, compassionate patient care, and remarkable leadership.” He was also cited for “going above and beyond to teach and mentor medical students and residents, while also improving the work environment through initiatives like renovating the ICU workroom” at the Dallas VA Medical Center.

George Doumat, M.D., a second-year categorical resident from Beirut, Lebanon, was recognized for “clinical excellence, thoughtful leadership, and academic engagement,” including “providing compassionate patient care, mentoring colleagues, contributing to research, and leading initiatives within the residency program, such as educational updates and committee work.”

Maria Saad Menezes, M.D., a third-year categorical resident from Campo Grande, Brazil, was honored for “unparalleled knowledge, teaching excellence, and compassionate patient care,” as well as “excelling as a mentor, researcher, and educator, with impactful publications and projects in hematology/oncology and AI-based learning.” ■

Internal Medicine News Portal

in case you missed it

News and Digital Media Featuring Internal Medicine Colleagues

- [Mutation in ACAA2 Gene Modifies How Body Breaks Down Fat for Fuel, UTSW Researchers Find](#) (via UTSW Newsroom, with Abhimanyu Garg, M.D.)
- [Rise of Anti-Science Rhetoric Has Fundamentally Changed the Relationship Between Doctors and Patients](#) (via STAT, with Krutika Kuppalli, M.D.)
- [Key Protein Behind Necroptotic Cell Death Could Drive New Treatment Strategies](#) (via UTSW Newsroom, with Ayaz Najafov, Ph.D.)
- [Liver Hormone May Help Shield the Body from Flu Symptoms, Study Finds](#) (via The Dallas Morning News, with Kartik Rajagopalan, M.D., Ph.D.)
- [What You Should Know About Chagas Disease in North Texas](#) (via MedBlog, with Krutika Kuppalli, M.D.)

personnel updates



Talifarro Joins Faculty Affairs Group

Teeaira Talifarro, B.S., has joined the Central Administration office as a Faculty Affairs Coordinator, in support of the divisions of General Internal Medicine, Combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, Nephrology, and Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine.

Originally from Michigan, Ms. Talifarro holds a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration and management from the University of Michigan - Flint. Prior to joining Internal Medicine, she worked as a Program Coordinator with a focus on credentialing in the Office of Advanced Practice Providers and as an Administrative Associate in DeBerardinis Lab. She also has administrative experience in patient and education services. ■

need to know

Registration Open for Quality Improvement Courses

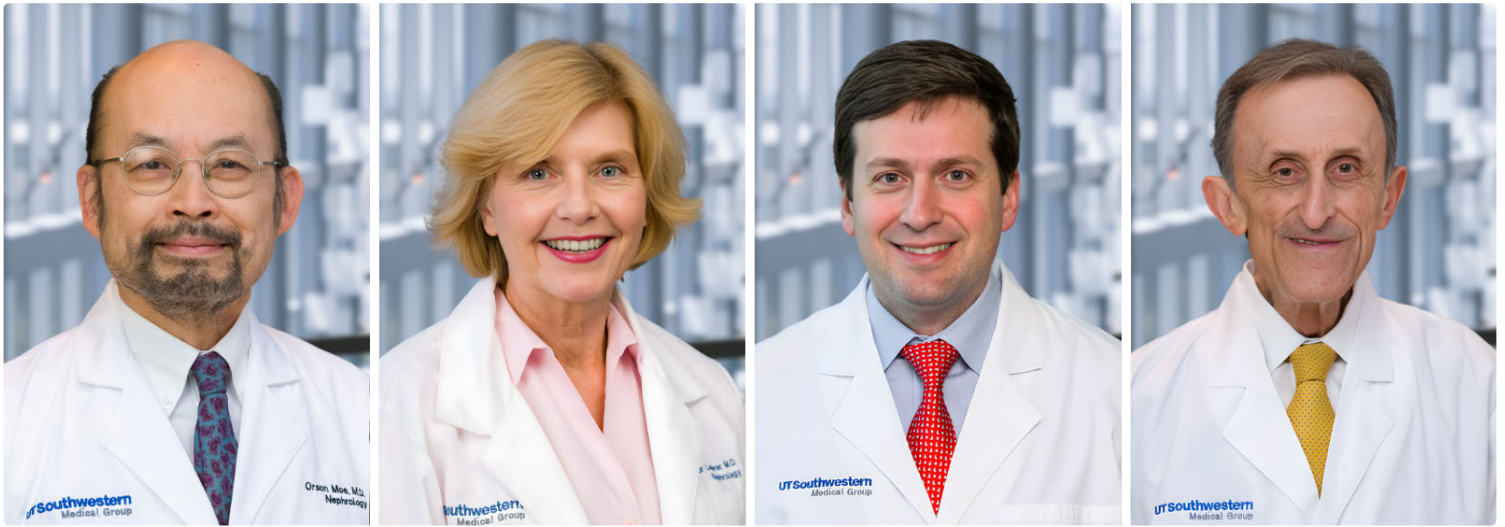
The Office of Quality, Safety, and Outcomes Education has announced registration for two Quality Improvement (QI) courses aimed at strengthening system-wide improvement efforts.

- **QI Basics – Your Foundation for Improvement**
The next cohort begins on **Monday, Jan. 12**. This interactive course introduces essential tools for driving meaningful change. No prior experience is required. It's open to physicians, nurses, advanced practice providers, administrators, researchers, and any team member committed to improvement.
- **Advanced Course in Quality Improvement**
Starting **Tuesday, Jan. 27**, this four-session program builds on QI Basics or Yellow/Green Belt training. Participants will apply systems thinking and leadership principles to real-world projects with expert coaching.

Registration closes on **Monday, Jan. 5**, and seats are limited. ■

[Learn More About the QI Courses](#)

this week



Pak Center Group to Present Grand Rounds on Dec. 19

Members of the Charles and Jane Pak Center for Mineral Metabolism and Clinical Research will present the [Internal Medicine Grand Rounds](#) lecture on Friday, Dec. 19, at 8 a.m. in D1.502. Their topic: "Integrating Patient Care and Discovery."

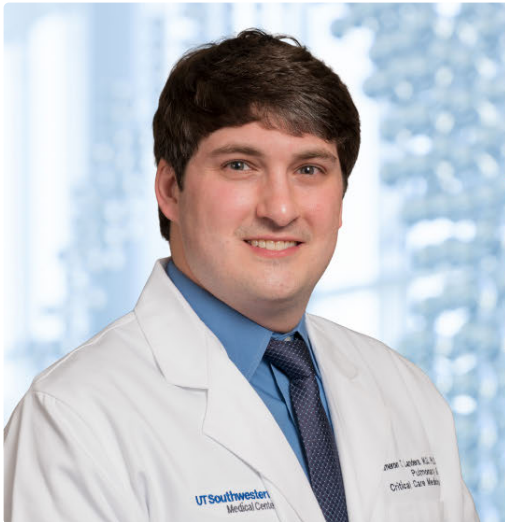
Presenters include, pictured from left, **Orson Moe, M.D.**, a Professor in the Division of Nephrology and Director of the Pak Center; **Eleanor Lederer, M.D.**, a Professor in the Division of Nephrology; **Naim Maalouf, M.D.**, a Professor in the Division of Endocrinology and Associate Director of the Pak Center; and **Khashayar Sakhaee, M.D.**, a Professor in the Division of Nephrology and Director of the Mineral Metabolism Clinic at Parkland Health. ■

Dr. Moe holds the Charles and Jane Pak Chair in Mineral Metabolism Research and the Donald Seldin Professorship in Clinical Investigation.

Dr. Lederer holds the John S. Fordtran, M.D. Professorship in Calcium Research.

Dr. Maalouf holds the Frederic C. Bartter Professorship in Vitamin D Research.

Dr. Sakhaee holds the BeautiControl Cosmetics Inc. Professorship in Mineral Metabolism and Osteoporosis, and the Laura Kim Pak Professorship in Mineral Metabolism Research.



Landers to Discuss a Key Restrictor of Coronavirus Pathogenesis at Research Conference

Cameron Landers, M.D., Ph.D., a Physician-Scientist Training Program Fellow in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, will present the [Internal Medicine Research Conference](#) on Friday, Dec. 19, at noon in D1.502. His topic: "From Lungs to Blood: How LY6E Restricts Coronavirus Pathogenesis."

Dr. Landers holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, which he obtained *summa cum laude*. He earned his doctorate in translational biology and molecular medicine and his medical degree at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, where he participated in the Medical Scientist Training Program as a Hudson Scholar. He then completed internal medicine residency training at UT Southwestern.

His research has focused on the immunological mechanisms that link allergic inflammation, antifungal defense, and innate immune signaling. His published work has explored how environmental exposures, such as allergens, fungi, cigarette smoke, and electronic cigarette vapor, disrupt lung immunity and contribute to chronic airway

diseases like asthma and emphysema. He also has published papers on the role of coagulation factors, fibrinogen cleavage, and Toll-like receptor pathways in initiating allergic and antifungal responses, as well as molecular regulators such as microRNAs and STAT signaling. Additionally, he has examined neuroimmune interactions during fungal infections and immune-mediated neuropathies. He is currently investigating the basic mechanisms through which the lungs are protected from viral pathogens. ■

Other Upcoming Lectures & Conferences of Note

- Tuesday, Dec. 16, 8 a.m.: [Infectious Diseases Recruitment Seminar](#) with Dr. Waridibo Allison (University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth) – “Translating Research into Policy: Why it Matters and How Researchers Can Do It”
- Wednesday, Dec. 17, 6:30 a.m.: [Anesthesiology Grand Rounds](#) with Dr. Eric Rosero (Anesthesiology & Pain Management) – “Key Research Design Concepts for Becoming a Discerning Reader of Medical Literature”
- Thursday, Dec. 18, Noon: [Infectious Diseases Grand Rounds](#) with Dr. Neima Briggs (Yale University) – “Principles of Protection and Trained Tolerance from Parasitic Infections”
- Thursday, Dec. 18, Noon.: [Renal Grand Rounds](#) with Dr. Fabian Bock (Vanderbilt University) – “SRac1 and the Actin Cytoskeleton in Multicystic Dysplastic Kidneys”
- Thursday, Dec. 18, 1 p.m.: [Artificial Intelligence in Health and Health Care Discussion](#) with Don Taylor (UT Dallas) – “Artificial Intelligence in Health and Health Care: Priorities for Action”

reminders



Annual GI Symposium Scheduled for Feb. 21

Faculty members from the Division of Digestive and Liver Diseases will present their annual “What’s New in GI” symposium on **Saturday, Feb. 21, at the Marriott Dallas Las Colinas**. The one-day, in-person CME course, directed by **David Fudman, M.D., Neha Patel, M.D., and Tarek Sawas, M.D.**, is designed for gastroenterologists, GI surgeons, internal medicine physicians, family practice providers, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other healthcare providers with an interest in gastroenterology and hepatology. Attendees will be provided with practical information that can be applied to their clinical practice. Discussions will include the latest updates on recognizing symptoms and using current data to establish diagnoses and formulate appropriate treatment plans for the management of gastrointestinal diseases. ■

For more information, click [here](#).

save the date



Richard Losick to Present 'History of Molecular Biology'

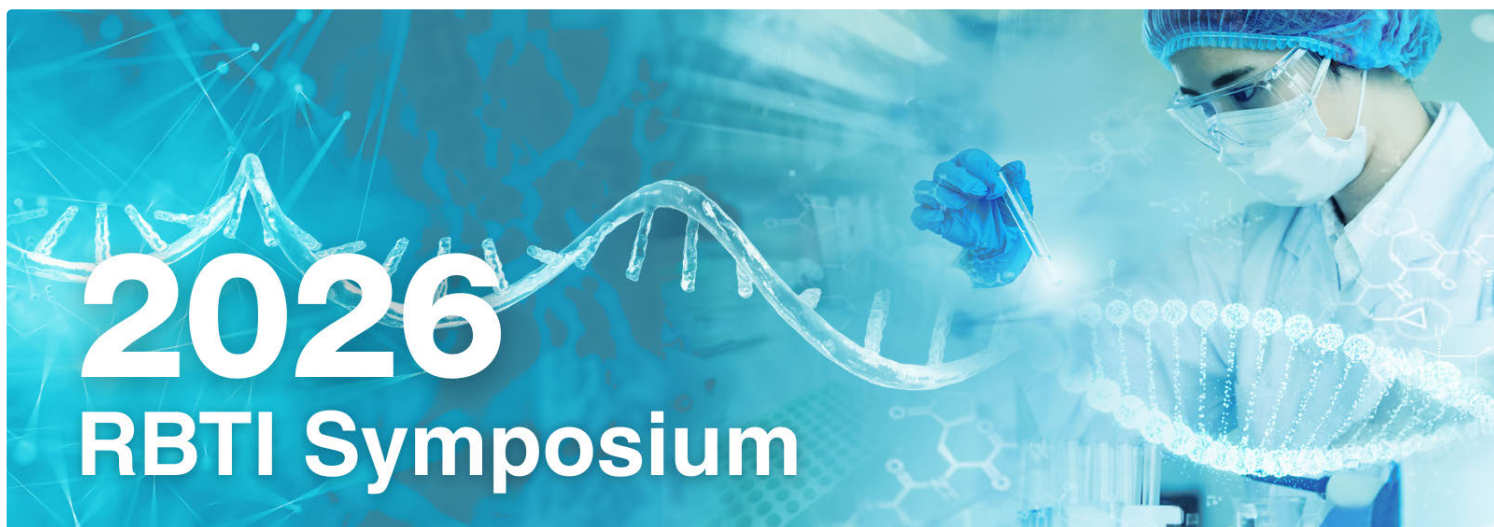
UT Southwestern will become the first U.S. institution outside Harvard University to offer "The History of Molecular Biology," a renowned course taught by **Richard Losick, Ph.D.**, Emeritus Professor, former HHMI investigator at Harvard, and one of the most celebrated educators in molecular biology.

"This is a deep dive into the groundbreaking discoveries and seminal papers that shaped the field," said **Andrew Zinn, M.D., Ph.D.**, Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and a Professor in the McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development. Students will engage directly with pivotal publications, guided by Dr. Losick himself, who brings firsthand insight as someone who was often 'in the room where it happened.'"

Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows may enroll for credit. Faculty and staff are invited to audit. The 10-session, in-person course will take place **March 16-20 and 23-27 from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the NB2.EEF auditorium**. Those who miss a class can reference Dr. Losick's eBook, *The River Divides into Thousands of Branches*.

"This is a rare opportunity to learn from one of molecular biology's great scientists," **Dr. Zinn** said. "Don't miss this chance to be part of something truly special." ■

Dr. Zinn holds the Henry Ross Perot Distinguished Professorship in Biomedical Science, and the Rolf Haberecht and Ute Schwarz Haberecht Deanship of the UT Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.



Second RNA Biology and Therapy Initiative Seminar Set for April 23

The RNA Biology and Therapy Initiative (RBTI) is gearing up for its second campus-wide symposium, set for **Thursday, April 23**. This event will bring together leading scientists to explore the rapidly evolving world of RNA biology and therapeutics, a field that has surged to the forefront of biomedical research.

From its role in infectious disease and cancer to groundbreaking RNA-based therapies and vaccines, RNA science is transforming medicine, and UT Southwestern is recognized for its internationally known experts in the field. The RBTI was launched in 2024 to unite this talent, spark collaboration, and advance our standing as a global leadership in RNA research and therapy.

The inaugural symposium in 2024 drew more than 200 attendees and featured 70 posters and 17 oral presentations. Building on that success, the 2026 event will feature as its keynote speaker **Anastasia Khorovod, Ph.D.**, of the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School. Dr. Khorovod is a leading scientist and inventor whose [laboratory](#) has reshaped how RNA-based drugs are designed, delivered, and translated into real-world treatments.

A call for abstracts will be announced in early 2026. ■

[Visit the RBTI Site for More Information](#)



Jon Garinn
Medicine Minute Editor

Look for the next *Medicine Minute* on **Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2025.**

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

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