



2026 Leaders in Clinical Excellence Award recipients

Sept. 2, 2026

To the UT Southwestern Community:

We are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2026 Leaders in Clinical Excellence Awards, whose unwavering commitment to the highest standards of patient care exemplifies the very best of UT Southwestern.

Established in 2018, these awards honor clinical faculty across our many sites of service who strengthen patient care, support the education and training of the next generation of healthcare professionals, and advance UT Southwestern's mission. The awards encompass seven categories, including the Patricia and William L. Watson Jr., M.D. Award for Excellence in Clinical Medicine, UT Southwestern's highest honor in clinical care.

We thank all those who took the time to nominate and recognize these outstanding colleagues, as well as the many deserving individuals represented among nearly 200 nominations in total. We are also grateful to the members of the Leaders in Clinical Excellence selection committee, once again led by John Mansour, M.D., Professor of Surgery and Vice Chair of Quality in the Department of Surgery, and Maeve Sheehan, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics and Associate Vice President of the Pediatric Group Practice. Their thoughtful deliberations and dedication to this process uphold the rigor and distinction of these awards.

Please save the date for the awards **ceremony on Nov. 4 at 4:30 p.m.** in the Tom and Lula Gooch Auditorium. We will share additional details soon, along with features on each recipient.

We look forward to celebrating this year's honorees, whose accomplishments and dedication to our patients inspire us all.

Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D.

President
UT Southwestern Medical Center

Jonathan Efron, M.D.

Executive Vice President for Health System Affairs
UT Southwestern Medical Center

W. P. Andrew Lee, M.D.

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Dean, UT Southwestern Medical School

2026 Leaders in Clinical Excellence Award Recipients

Patricia and William L. Watson Jr., M.D. Award for Excellence in Clinical Medicine

This prestigious award, UT Southwestern's top honor for clinical care, recognizes a faculty physician who exemplifies excellence in patient care, is a leader in advancing clinical innovations and outcomes, and has had a profound impact on patients, students, trainees, and patients.

Kevin D. Courtney, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Internal Medicine, (Hematology and Oncology)

Rising Star Award

This award recognizes exceptional early-career clinical faculty whose actions and activities consistently exemplify commitment, professionalism, and leadership.

Ralph Nicholas Burns, M.D., Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Audra Clark, M.D., Department of Surgery

Institutional Service Award

This award honors clinical faculty who consistently share time and expertise in service to internal committees, task forces, and other institutional activities that make a significant impact on the care delivered to UT Southwestern patients.

Patrick Leavey, M.D., Department of Pediatrics

Mentoring Award

This award celebrates clinicians who demonstrate exceptional commitment and effectiveness as mentors to healthcare providers.

Adam M. Brenner, M.D., Department of Psychiatry
Andrew Zhang, M.D., Departments of Plastic Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery

Patient and Family Recognition Award

This award honors clinical faculty whose dedication to the compassionate, respectful delivery of exceptional patient care has garnered the highest degree of patient trust and satisfaction.

Katherine M. Raspovic, D.P.M., Departments of Orthopaedic Surgery and Plastic Surgery

Program Development Award

This award celebrates the innovation and collaboration that are foundational to the success of UT Southwestern Medical Center. It recognizes a group of clinical faculty and staff who have worked together as a team to create, develop, and sustain an innovative program that significantly advances our ability to improve the care received by our patients.

Clements Hospital Nutrition Program

Led by **Sara Hennessy, M.D.**, **Sneha Bhat, M.D.**, and **Hillary Prince, M.D.**, Department of Surgery

Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center Community Oncology Program

Led by **Suzanne Cole, M.D.**, Department of Internal Medicine, (Hematology and Oncology)

The President's Award for Humanism in Clinical Care

This award honors clinical faculty who exemplify the humanistic spirit of patient-centered medicine, both through clinical excellence and in outstanding compassion in the delivery of care.

Christine Pazandak, M.D., Department of Pediatrics