



## UT Southwestern selected to operate Texas Behavioral Health Center

December 24, 2025

To the UT Southwestern Community:

I am pleased to announce that, after leading the planning, design, and construction of the new Texas Behavioral Health Center, UT Southwestern has now been selected by our state leadership to operate this innovative facility. We look forward to caring for our first patients there this summer.

This milestone is the culmination of a process established by the Texas Legislature and carried out in close partnership with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). As I communicated last June, the Legislature initially directed HHSC to prepare to oversee operations but created a mechanism to evaluate long-term options. Through that request for information process, and following thoughtful deliberation, UT Southwestern has now been entrusted with operating the new facility – an outcome that reflects the confidence of state leaders and our community in UT Southwestern’s capabilities and commitment.

When fully operational, the hospital will provide 292 beds serving both adult and pediatric patients. We intend to introduce new models of care over time, such as interventional psychiatry and partial hospitalization programs. These services are designed to expand access, improve outcomes, and strengthen the continuum of behavioral health care for North Texas and the state.

UT Southwestern brings extensive experience to this opportunity. Our faculty and teams already deliver evidence-based, patient-centered behavioral health care across multiple hospital systems and settings, integrating pharmacological, psychotherapeutic, and neuromodulation treatments with the specialized medical care these patients often require. That experience and expertise will inform the clinical programs, staffing, and operations necessary to run the new center safely and effectively.

We are deeply appreciative of HHSC’s collaboration throughout every phase of planning and construction, as well as the steadfast support from our community partners for this essential expansion of behavioral health services. I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of **Hicham Ibrahim, M.D., M.B.A.**, Vice President and Senior Executive Officer for Ambulatory Services; **Becky McCulley, M.S.N., RN**, Vice President for Clinical Programming and Facility Development; and **Juan M. Guerra Jr., M.B.A.**, Vice President for Facilities Management. Their expertise and dedication – along with the commitment of colleagues across the Department of Psychiatry, led by Chair **Tarek Rajji, M.D.**, as well as the Health System, Business Affairs, Government Affairs, and other key areas – have been instrumental in

bringing this project to fruition. We will now direct our efforts to the substantial work required before opening.

Teams across the institution are galvanizing to prepare the hospital to receive its first patients. The hospital will be under the overarching leadership of **Jonathan Efron, M.D.**, Executive Vice President for Health System Affairs. I want to especially thank the following individuals who will assume interim leadership positions:

- **Hicham Ibrahim, M.D., M.B.A.** – Interim Chief Executive Officer
- **Kala Bailey, M.D., M.B.A.** – Interim Chief Medical Officer
- **Martin Marshall, M.B.A.** – Interim Chief Operating Officer
- **Byron Carlisle, M.S.N., RN** – Interim Chief Nursing Officer
- **Mark Meyer, CPA** – Interim Chief Financial Officer

We will share additional details on timelines, employment opportunities, and phased operations in the weeks and months ahead. I thank all those involved for their continued dedication to our mission and to the patients and families we serve. Together, we are committed to setting a new standard for behavioral health care in North Texas, providing help to those most in need.

Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D.  
President  
UT Southwestern Medical Center