



U.S. News and World Report Announcement

July 17, 2012

To the UT Southwestern Community:

I write to address the 2012-13 medical specialty and hospital rankings issued today by U.S. News & World Report. We are very pleased that 12 of our clinical programs received national recognition, but note that overall our collective rankings are lower than in the past two years. This suggests that we have significant opportunities for improvement in the year ahead.

Although changes in the methodology used by U.S. News & World Report may account for some of the declines in the rankings of specific programs and of UT Southwestern overall, it is clear that the landscape for quality reporting is shifting from reputational indicators to metrics based on specific clinical care processes and outcomes – and that we must continue to make progress in achieving our goals.

Much has been accomplished since we launched a Quality Initiative in 2010, but we need to increase the pace of change to ensure that we are in a position to demonstrate – and not simply assert – our commitment to clinical excellence, as I emphasized in a message sent at the time we set out an agenda of clinical transformation more than three years ago. As we seek to increase the scale and scope of our clinical programs, a pervasive engagement with ongoing quality improvement is essential to our success.

We have recently launched a new clinical data portal, the Health System Performance Tool, which creates the basis for improving our understanding of relationships between treatments and outcomes and offers important information to guide clinical decisions and actions. As part of our overall quality effort, we are working on other data, reporting, and operational enhancements that will improve our overall patient care environment.

At the same time, we can all be pleased that our programs in Neurology & Neurosurgery and Urology are nationally ranked, and that 10 other UT Southwestern specialty areas are recognized as high performing: Cancer; Cardiology & Heart Surgery; Diabetes & Endocrinology, Ear, Nose & Throat; Gastroenterology; Geriatrics; Gynecology; Nephrology; Orthopedics; and Pulmonology.

Our short- and long-term goal can be nothing less than delivering comprehensive and consistent clinical excellence. With a collective commitment across campus, we will be successful in providing exceptional patient care, creating breakthroughs in research, and educating the next generation of care-givers. Achieving excellence is a team effort, and I thank

you for the contributions you make each day to this mission, in whatever role you play as a member of the UT Southwestern community.

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