

Tapan Patel honored for work with physicians in training

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Tapan Patel, M.D., has received the Texas Medical Association's J.T. "Lamar" McNew Award. Patel is the program director for the graduate medical education internal medicine residency program at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas.

More than 30 physicians were nominated for the award, and two were selected as finalists. The winner was chosen through a vote by residents and fellows statewide.



"Dr. Patel was selected for his commitment to serving as a role model among educators and his incredible support of his residents' legislative and academic

endeavors," said Shelly Monks, FACHE, chief academic officer at Texas Health Resources. "Texas Health Dallas internal medicine residency graduates have been elected to more than half of the councils and committees of the Texas Medical Association. And next year, a Texas Health Dallas internal medicine resident, Dr. Subhan Tabba, will be seated on the association's board of trustees."

Texas Health Dallas' residency program was first accredited in 1977 and has graduated more than 250 residents. Patel was named director of the program two years ago, replacing Mark Feldman, M.D., who retired after 20 years on the hospital's medical staff. Patel, a nephrologist, is the first person from the Texas Health Dallas program to win the prestigious award.

"Dr. Patel has been involved with teaching residents his entire career at Texas Health," said Aurora Estevez, M.D., M.B.A., FACOG, chief quality and medical officer at the hospital. "He's a real visionary who has reinvigorated the program and has built on a strong foundation to take it to that next level."

A residency program is an important part of a hospital's success, Estevez said.

"The majority of our residents stay with our hospital," she said. "Many of our physician leaders, who are really the future of the hospital, have graduated from the program. You want to 'grow your own.' This creates a very sustainable future physician workforce."

The program also pushes the hospital and faculty to use newer procedures and treatments, she and Patel agree.

"Once you finish your residency or fellowship, your desire to read or research more dies down," Patel said. "So, working with residents keeps me on my toes."

"Any hospital that has a residency program is doing the latest things," Estevez added. "The generation that's learning is pushing the envelope and keeping hospitals on the cutting edge."

Patel has big dreams for the program, including expanding the number of residents trained and adding fellowships.

“The program has remained the same, but the landscape has changed, and we need to adapt,” he said. “First of all, we have the capability to handle more than six residents a year. We have over a hundred faculty members, so that’s doable.

“Second is taking the program one step further and making it more recognized. The one thing other programs in Dallas have that we don’t is fellowships. The idea is to retain the physicians we’re teaching, but they’re not going to be able to stay with us if we don’t have something else to offer. While no final plans are confirmed, fellowship options are being considered as Texas Health expands its Graduate Medical Education programs.”

As for the McNew award, Patel said it hasn’t sunk in yet.

“You don’t teach residents and medical students for recognition,” he said. “But it feels good to be recognized, and I’m glad our residents are so involved in TMA.”

In its notification letter, the TMA praised Patel’s leadership and mentorship.

“You’ve shown a strong presence in resident education ranging from encouraging research to resident wellness,” the letter said. “Simply put, you inspire us to become better doctors and for this, we thank you.”

In addition to the Dallas program, residents are being trained at three other Texas Health campuses —Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Fort Worth, and a program with clinical rotations at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Denton and Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Hurst-Euless-Bedford. A fifth hospital, Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Plano, will begin training residents in July 2024.