

UT Southwestern Medical Center

Weathering the Storm Together: A Week of Strength and Selfless Service

Feb. 19, 2021

To the UT Southwestern community:

Over the course of the past week, many in the UT Southwestern community and their families have faced enormous challenges due to the impact of the extreme weather conditions, including disruptions in power and water supplies. These events are all the more difficult as they were superimposed on the stresses posed by the pandemic that has dominated much of life in the past year.

I write to acknowledge and thank all of those in the UT Southwestern community whose exceptional efforts during this most difficult week ensured that we continued to serve all those that depend on us – while doing everything possible to keep our campus safe. I want to especially thank our colleagues in the **Health System, including the UT Southwestern Medical Group working both at our facilities and at our partner institutions, as well Facilities Management, University Police, Safety and Business Continuity, Supply Chain, and Administration**. Our colleagues worked tirelessly to minimize the weather impact on campus operations to enable the continuous care of our patients and the safety of our faculty, staff, and learners.

I also recognize and appreciate those of you who worked behind the scenes to maintain our daily business operations, especially our colleagues in **IR** who enabled thousands of our staff members to operate remotely due to the inclement weather and hazardous road conditions. I am also grateful to our **Ambulatory and Clinical Operations** for reaching out to thousands of patients to reschedule appointments while our clinics and vaccination sites were closed.

Despite the many challenges we have faced over the last year, I am continually heartened by the many examples I see of the remarkable commitment to advance our institutional mission. During this week's weather events, it was inspiring to see shuttle drivers volunteering to join the Ice Brigade to clear walks and driveways, utilities personnel sleeping on cots in the energy plants, members of Safety and Business Continuity working throughout the night dealing with weather and water emergencies, and the many men and women who remained on campus throughout in order to cover shifts for colleagues who were unable to get to campus.

For some, this past week has created additional strains and presented new pressures, but I hope each of you know that UT Southwestern cares about you. As a reminder, mental health counseling and emotional support services are available to you and anyone in your household through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is provided confidentially and at no charge. To schedule an appointment or to inquire about services, please call the EAP at 214-648-5330 or email eap@utsouthwestern.edu.

I believe that this most difficult week has in many ways brought out the best in our institution and made clear where our true strengths lie – in the talents and the commitment of the faculty and staff that comprise the UT Southwestern community. That is the source of our ability to have accomplished much over the past several years and why I am confident that there is a bright future for UT Southwestern in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

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