

### Important influenza update

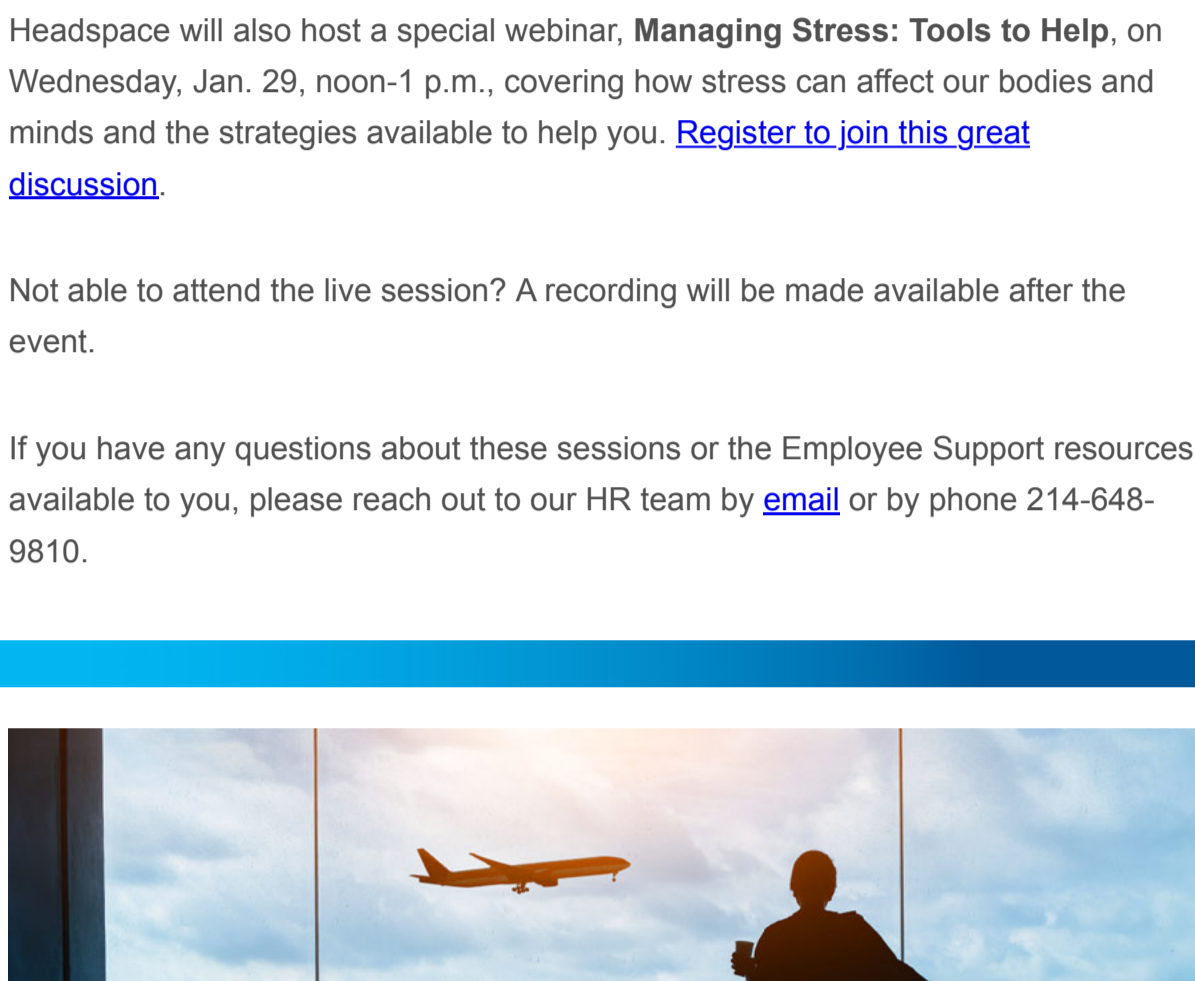
Flu activity is elevated across the country, and flu hospitalization rates are the highest we have seen for the 2024-2025 season. Consequently, our Infection Prevention and Control team activated our Influenza Alert status. Here is what this means for you:

- All health care providers, students, and trainees should have proof of their flu vaccination status (red sticker on their employee badge) before entering patient care units and procedural areas.
- Unvaccinated employees are required to wear a mask when entering those areas.
- Learn more online about the [UTSW flu policy and vaccination information](#).
- Supervisors can verify which employees are unvaccinated through Occupational Health's [ReadySet](#) supervisor tab.
- Visitors displaying symptoms of respiratory infection are advised not to visit patients and should be educated on proper preventive measures, including wearing a mask.

Currently, about 22.3% of flu tests are returning positive results in Dallas County, and that percentage is expected to climb in the coming weeks. Influenza A (H1N1) is being reported as the dominant strain in Dallas County and in Texas. Additionally, we are still experiencing a high rate of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) cases, with more than 26.7% of tests from area surveillance sites resulting as positive.

For more details and guidance, please visit this [FAQ for employees](#), or the [CDC website](#).

Preventing the spread of influenza and other respiratory viruses is everyone's responsibility. Thank you for doing your part to keep our workforce and our community as healthy as possible.



### UTSW and Headspace one-year anniversary celebration

To mark one year of partnership, [Human Resources](#) invites you to join our UTSW Employee Support team and Headspace experts for a three-day celebration.

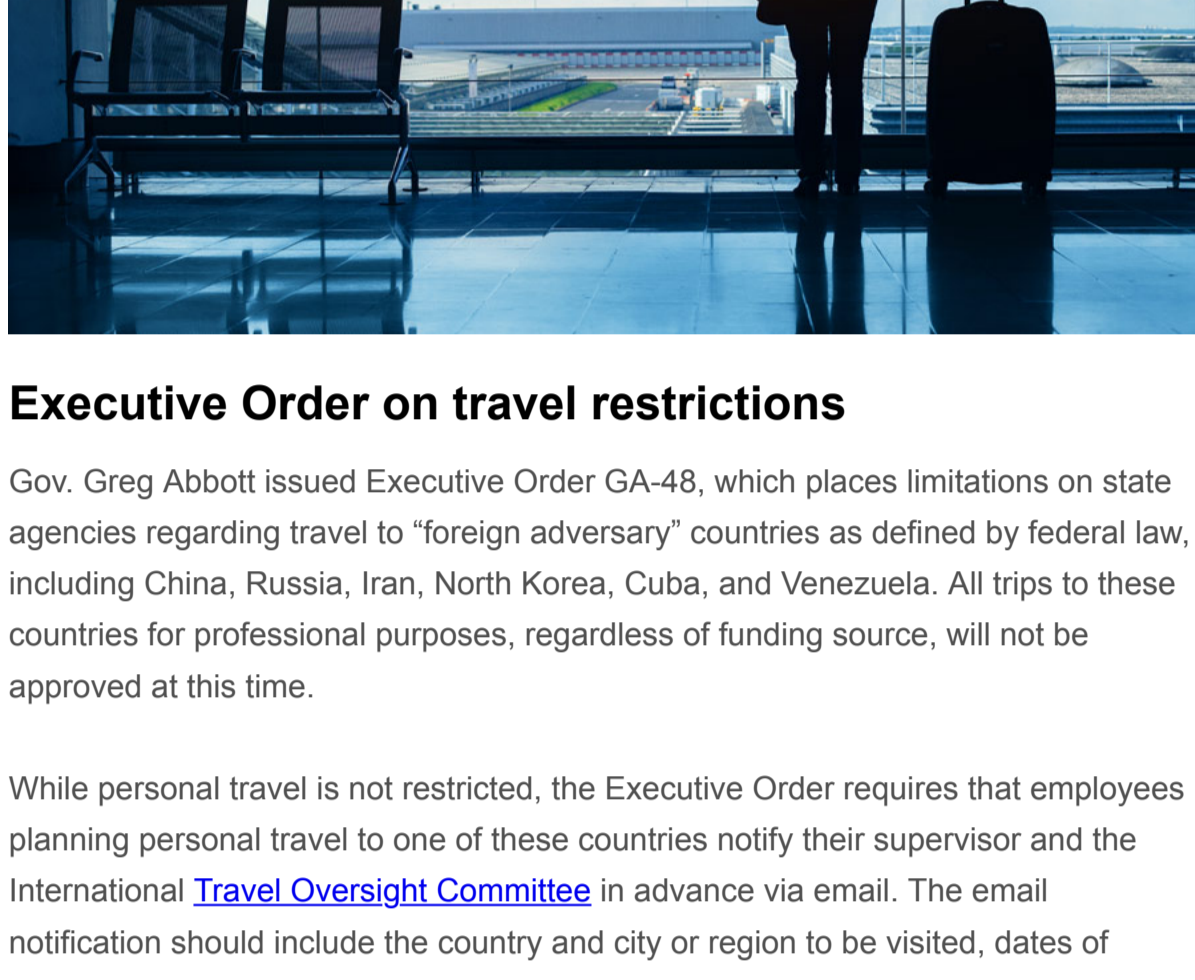
**On campus events: Jan. 28-30**  
Find valuable resources, engage in fun activities, and collect some great swag! You can learn how to make the most of your Headspace benefits, connect with colleagues and wellness experts, and share feedback on the well-being resources that would be most beneficial to support you.

- Jan. 28: [11 a.m.-2 p.m., CUH Cafeteria](#)
- Jan. 29: [11 a.m.-2 p.m., CUH Cafeteria](#)
- Jan. 30: [11 a.m.-2 p.m., NG3 Commons](#)

**Webinar: Jan. 29**  
Headspace will also host a special webinar, **Managing Stress: Tools to Help**, on Wednesday, Jan. 29, noon-1 p.m., covering how stress can affect our bodies and minds and the strategies available to help you. [Register to join this great discussion](#).

Not able to attend the live session? A recording will be made available after the event.

If you have any questions about these sessions or the Employee Support resources available to you, please reach out to our HR team by [email](#) or by phone 214-648-9810.



### Executive Order on travel restrictions

Gov. Greg Abbott issued Executive Order GA-48, which places limitations on state agencies regarding travel to "foreign adversary" countries as defined by federal law, including China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, and Venezuela. All trips to these countries for professional purposes, regardless of funding source, will not be approved at this time.

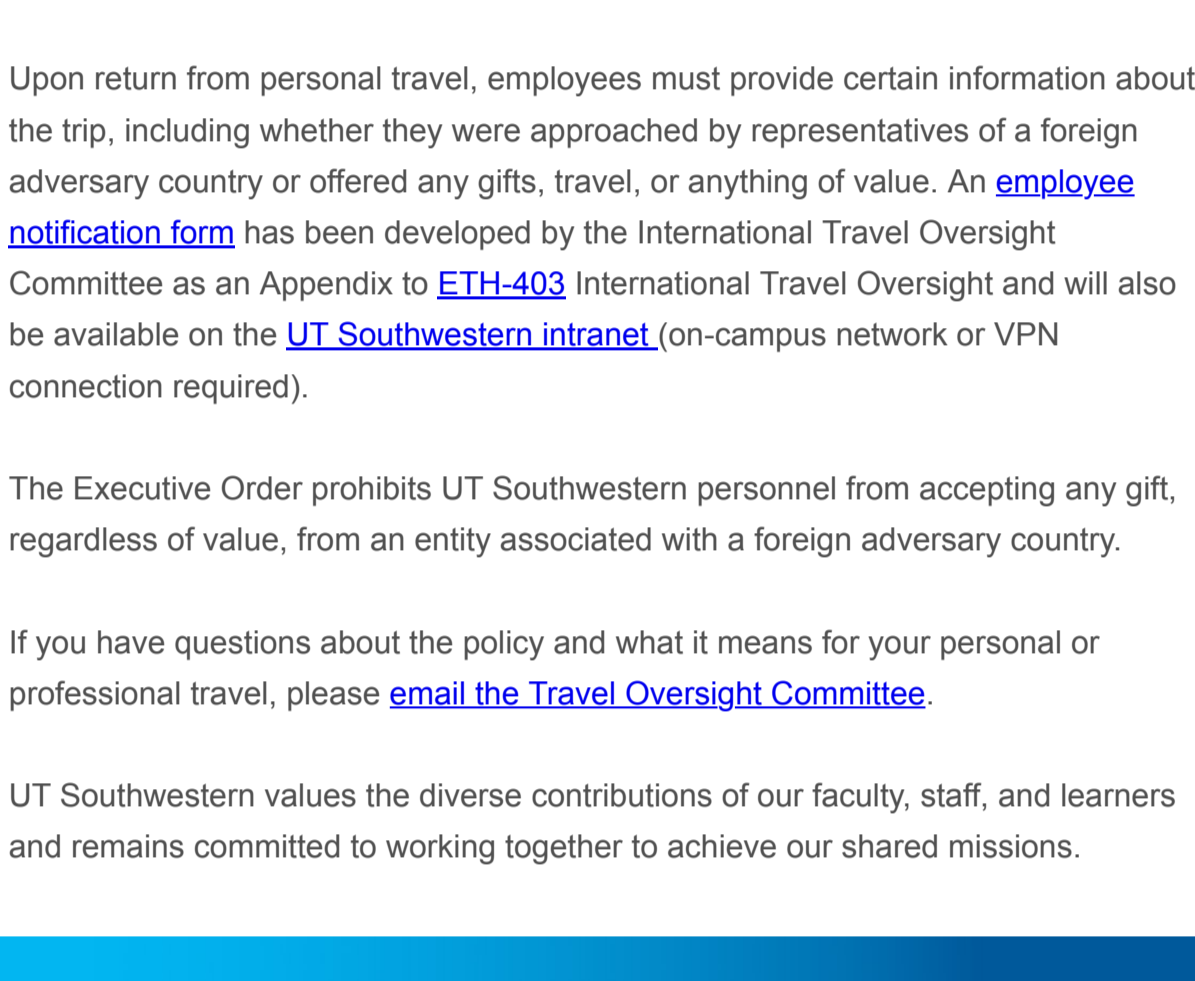
While personal travel is not restricted, the Executive Order requires that employees planning personal travel to one of these countries notify their supervisor and the International [Travel Oversight Committee](#) in advance via email. The email notification should include the country and city or region to be visited, dates of travel, and general purpose, for example: "We will visit family and friends and do some sightseeing."

Upon return from personal travel, employees must provide certain information about the trip, including whether they were approached by representatives of a foreign adversary country or offered any gifts, travel, or anything of value. An [employee notification form](#) has been developed by the International Travel Oversight Committee as an Appendix to [ETH-403](#) International Travel Oversight and will also be available on the [UT Southwestern intranet](#) (on-campus network or VPN connection required).

The Executive Order prohibits UT Southwestern personnel from accepting any gift, regardless of value, from an entity associated with a foreign adversary country.

If you have questions about the policy and what it means for your personal or professional travel, please [email the Travel Oversight Committee](#).

UT Southwestern values the diverse contributions of our faculty, staff, and learners and remains committed to working together to achieve our shared missions.

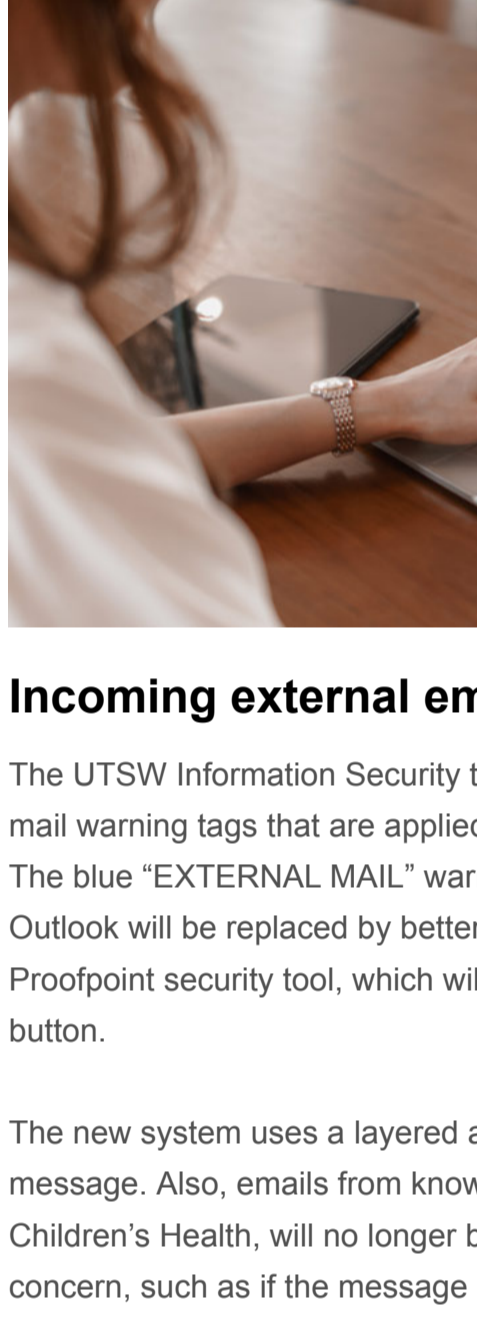


### Incoming external emails to have new flagging

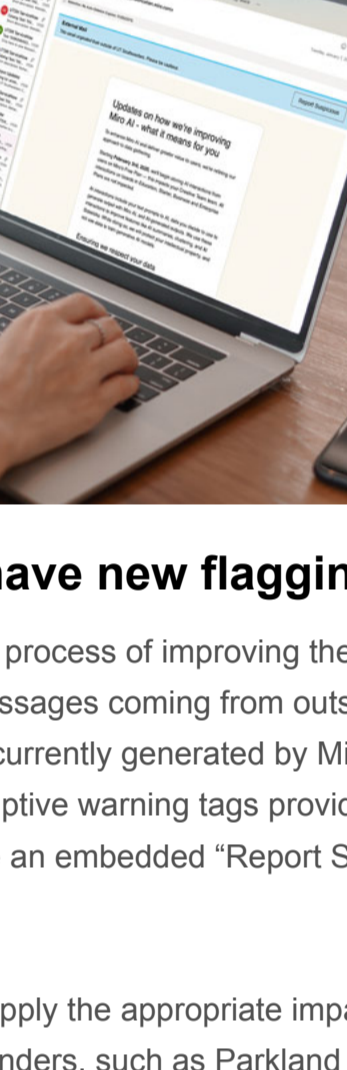
The UTSW Information Security team is in the process of improving the external mail warning tags that are applied to email messages coming from outside UTSW. The blue "EXTERNAL MAIL" warning banner currently generated by Microsoft Outlook will be replaced by better, more descriptive warning tags provided by our Proofpoint security tool, which will also include an embedded "Report Suspicious" button.

The new system uses a layered approach to apply the appropriate impact warning message. Also, emails from known, trusted senders, such as Parkland Health or Children's Health, will no longer be labeled "external," except if there is an actual concern, such as if the message is suspected of being fraudulent.

Users should begin noticing the new external message graphics in the coming days as the Info Sec team rolls out this important update. Please email [Information Security](#) with any questions.



PRESIDENT'S LECTURE SERIES



### President's Lecture featuring Daniel Siegwart, Ph.D.

Genetic medicines in which molecules of DNA or RNA are the therapeutic agents hold enormous promise for treating diseases ranging from genetic or inflammatory disorders to cancer. Although several of these therapies are currently being investigated or used to treat dozens of maladies, getting them precisely to where they're needed in the body has been challenging.

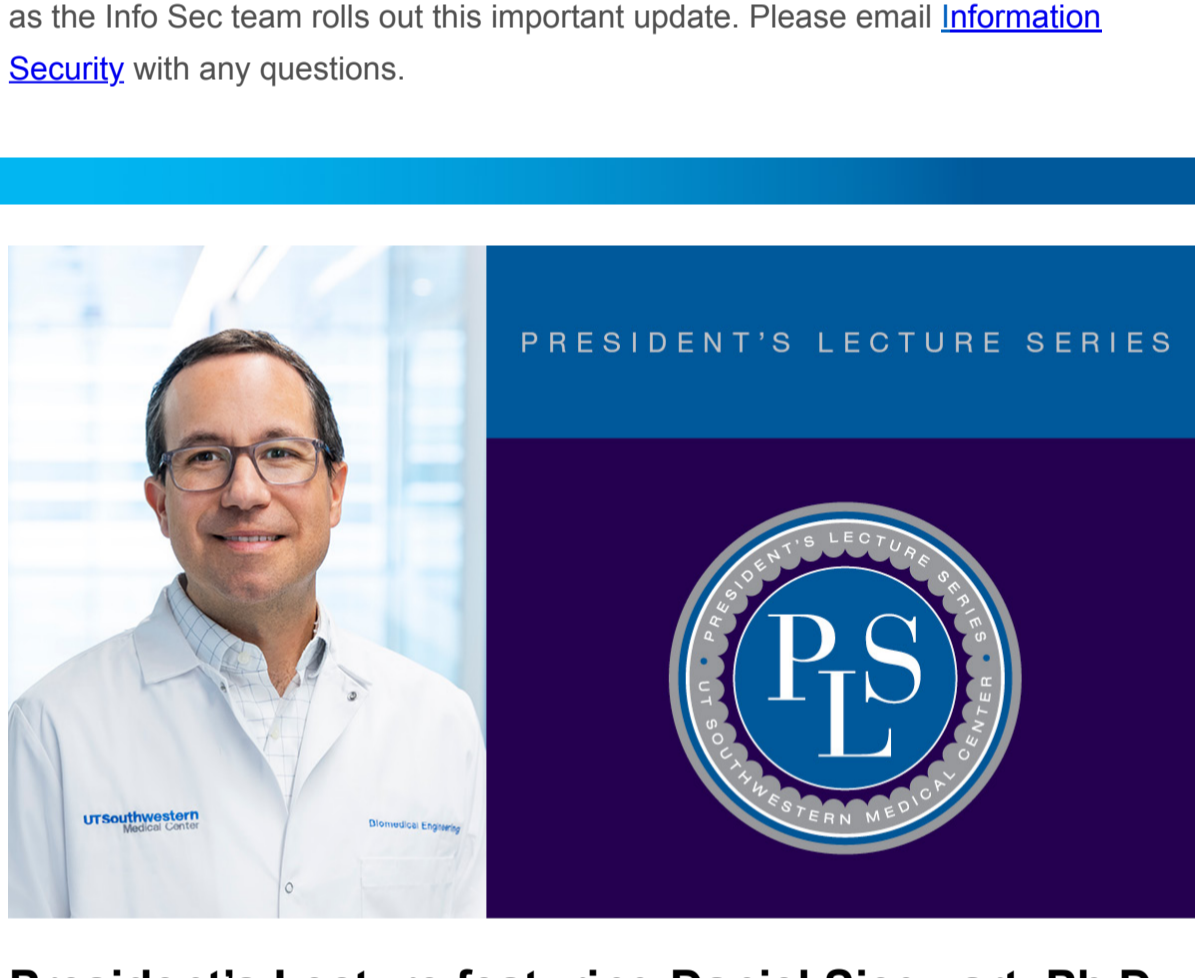
Over the last decade, **Daniel Siegwart, Ph.D.**, Professor in the Departments of Biomedical Engineering and Biochemistry and in the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, has made strides toward delivery of nanoparticles carrying genetic medicines, resulting in numerous publications and patents.

He will detail these efforts as the first speaker of this year's President's Lecture Series. His presentation, "Innovation in Nanotechnology: From Vaccines to Novel Genetic Disease Treatment," on Feb. 13 at 4 p.m. will be held in the Tom and Lula Gooch Auditorium, with a reception to follow. The event will also be livestreamed.

**Registration is required.**

Learn more about Dr. Siegwart and his work in this story on [Center Times Plus](#).

[Register for the PLS](#)



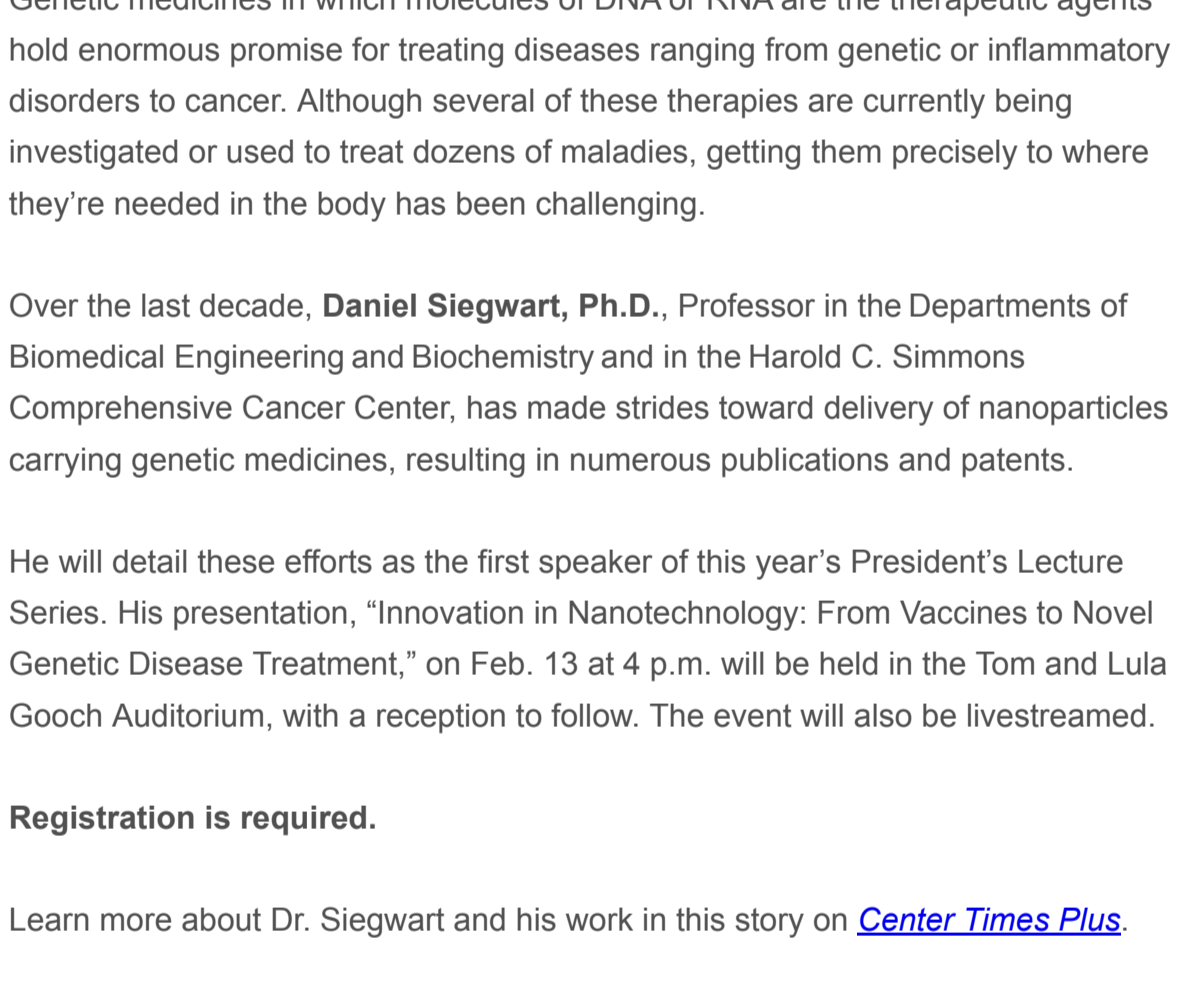
### COI Statement submission period opens today

Each year, UT Southwestern faculty members, researchers, advanced practice providers, and others are required to complete a Conflict of Interest (COI) Statement of Financial Interests ("Statement"). The 2025 COI Statement submission period is open today, and submissions **must be completed by March 1**.

Announcement emails are being sent to all individuals who are required to complete the annual COI Training and submit a 2025 COI Statement. Please check your inbox, and plan to complete your Statement by March 1, 2025. If you do not receive an email requesting submission, no action is required.

For convenience, the [COI-Info Portal platform](#) offers in one location the COI Training module and the Statement of Financial Interests, which is prepopulated with disclosures from 2024.

If you have questions, [email the COI Office](#) or visit the [Conflict of Interest](#) page on the UTSW intranet (network or VPN connection required).



### Deadline extended for abstracts and emerging ideas

Still thinking about contributing to this year's Charles Morris Ginsburg Simulation-Based Quality Improvement and Research Forum? Great news: the submission deadline has been extended. You now have until **Feb. 3** to submit your abstracts and emerging ideas.

This year's forum, hosted by the Simulation Center, will take place on **May 21** as a daylong hybrid event. It will feature an engaging lineup of poster and oral presentations, uniting clinical and research professionals passionate about simulation-based learning.

Details about the keynote speaker and registration will be shared next month.

[Abstract submission](#)

### Insider Guide



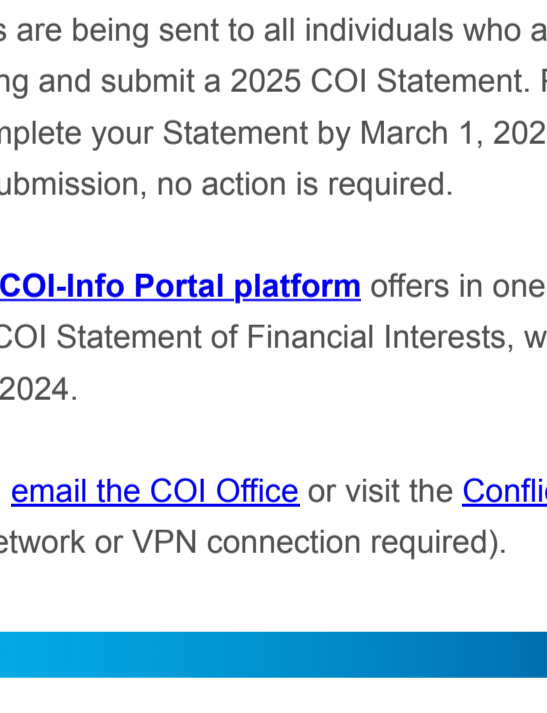
**'Melodies of Hope: Music, Dementia, and Brain Science'**

6:30-8 p.m., Jan. 23  
Winspear Opera House (2403 Flora St., Dallas)

Join UT Southwestern and The Dallas Opera for a free event that explores the powerful connection between music and memory and the impact on people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Featuring a panel discussion led by experts from UTSW's O'Donnell Brain Institute, attendees will learn about the connections between music, memory, and cognition, as well as care, research, and groundbreaking new treatments on the horizon. For those unable to attend, the event will be recorded and shared on the DSO website.

[Registration](#) is required.

[Details](#)



### Introduction to Scopus AI

Noon-1 p.m., Jan.30  
Virtual

Learn about Scopus AI, a new AI-powered research support tool available through the library. This intro session, as well as a training on Feb. 12, will cover how the tool works and how to use it to research articles from the Scopus corpus.

Registration required.

[Learn more](#)



### UTSW Events Calendar

Looking for your daily dose of happenings?  
The UTSW Events Calendar is updated every day.

[Click to view upcoming or trending events](#)

Share your *Insider* suggestions by sending them to [utswinsider@utsouthwestern.edu](mailto:utswinsider@utsouthwestern.edu). Looking for an item in a past edition of this newsletter? Check out our [Insider archive](#).