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**UT Southwestern bone-marrow transplant program
earns national recognition for excellence**

DALLAS – Jan. 25, 2006 – Two national organizations have given the bone marrow transplant program at UT Southwestern Medical Center their highest ratings for excellence in the treatment of patients with blood cancers.

After a rigorous inspection of all services and facilities of UT Southwestern's bone marrow transplant program, the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (FACT) has awarded it accreditation, the gold seal of achievement for such programs in the nation. Currently, there are 131 such FACT-accredited programs in the country, including eight in Texas. FACT is headquartered at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

In addition, the Myelodysplastic Syndromes Foundation has recognized UT Southwestern as a Center of Excellence in the research, diagnosis and treatment of myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), a group of blood cancers. UT Southwestern is the only medical institution in North Texas that has earned this distinction from the Crosswicks, N.J.-based foundation.

Both honors affirm UT Southwestern's place among the elite of the nation's treatment centers for blood cancers, said Dr. Robert Collins, director of the UT Southwestern Hematopoietic Cell Transplant Program in the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center.

"It confirms what our patients and referring physicians in our region already know – that we've got a great program that is dedicated to excellence," Dr. Collins said. "Our treatment results are among the best in the country."

Dr. Simrit Parmar, assistant professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern who specializes in the treatment of MDS, said the Center of Excellence designation "identifies our institution as a major referral center for MDS. As a result, we will be able to participate in several national clinical trials and will continue to have access to cutting-edge therapies."

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