

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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## UT SOUTHWESTERN NAMES MEDICAL SCHOOL DEAN

DALLAS – May 6, 1998 – Dr. Robert J. Alpern, a professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, has been named dean of the UT Southwestern Medical School, effective July 1.

A renowned clinical researcher in the field of kidney disease, Alpern has served as chief of nephrology at UT Southwestern since 1987, the year he joined the faculty. He replaces Dr. Bill Neaves, who is now executive vice president for academic affairs.

As dean of Southwestern Medical School, Alpern will oversee the education of about 800 medical students and over 1,000 clinical residents in training. Alpern also will work to fulfill the educational, clinical and scientific mission of the medical school faculty, which includes four active Nobel laureates.

"Dr. Alpern's distinguished accomplishments embody the spirit of UT Southwestern's goals for success in medical education, scientific research and patient health care," said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, UT Southwestern president.

Alpern is a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the Association of American Physicians. He also is the first holder of the Ruth W. and Milton P. Levy Sr. Chair in Molecular Nephrology, which was established at UT Southwestern in 1994.

"I'm looking forward to taking a leadership role at UT Southwestern, which will allow me to help establish new programs as well as provide continued support for successful programs already in place," said Alpern, a 1976 graduate of the University of Chicago Division of the Biological Sciences Pritzker School of Medicine.

"I'm also looking forward to working with Dr. Wildenthal, Dr. Neaves and Dr. Willis Maddrey (executive vice president for clinical affairs) as well as department chairs and center directors, to help advance the school's future development."

Alpern's current research projects are aimed at studying the effects of dietary acids on renal

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cell function. Specifically he is investigating the regulation of renal bicarbonate and chloride absorption and its role in controlling body fluid homeostasis and blood pressure. He also is studying the renal basis of hypocitraturia, a cause of kidney stones, and is researching the role of endothelins in renal function and disease. His research is funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Advanced Research Program.

Alpern's medical research has been published in journals throughout the world. He is a consulting editor of the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* and *Kidney International* and is a section editor for *Current Opinion in Nephrology and Hypertension*. He serves on the editorial boards of *Seminars in Nephrology*, *Kidney and Blood Pressure Research*, *American Journal of Medical Sciences*, and *American Journal of Medicine*.

In addition to his research activities, Alpern treats patients at Zale Lipshy University Hospital and Parkland Memorial Hospital, two of five hospitals affiliated with UT Southwestern. He teaches nephrology to second-, third- and fourth-year medical students and serves as chairman of the admissions committee, a post he will vacate when he assumes the deanship.

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