

# HOUSTON Medical Times

Bringing Healthcare News to the Forefront

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## New Psychiatry Residency Program Brings Expanded Mental Health Care to East Texas

By Brittany Foreman

A new psychiatry residency program is launching in the area to help meet the state’s growing behavioral health workforce needs. Developed through the Sam Houston Regional Education Consortium (SHREC), in partnership with Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare and Huntsville Memorial Hospital, the program plans to welcome its inaugural class of four residents in July 2026. SHREC, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited institutional sponsor housed within the Sam Houston State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (SHSU-COM), will oversee the residency.

Texas faces one of the most significant shortages of mental health providers in the nation. Nearly all of Texas’s 254 counties are either wholly or partly designated as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas, with more than 170 counties lacking a single licensed psychiatrist. The impact is felt strongly in rural regions, where expanded training pipelines and community-based care are especially needed.

The SHREC Psychiatry Residency Program was developed to expand access to psychiatric care for Texans while training physicians who understand the needs of the communities they will serve. Residents will complete rotations through Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare’s outpatient and community-based programs, gaining experience across a wide range of behavioral health services.

“Texas continues to face critical shortages in behavioral health, and the



need for well-trained psychiatrists is only growing,” said Thomas J. Mohr, DO, dean of SHSU-COM. “This program represents an important step forward in improving access to care in East Texas and strengthening the behavioral health workforce across the state. Through our partnership with Tri-County and Huntsville

with SHSU-COM, these partners will deliver a range of clinical experiences that prepare residents to treat patients across the behavioral health spectrum.

“Tri-County’s service area includes some of the fastest-growing communities in the state of Texas,” said Evan Roberson, Tri-County’s executive director, emphasizing the regional impact of the collaboration.

“This collaboration is a critical step in expanding mental health resources by training compassionate, competent psychiatrists who are equipped to meet the growing needs of the populations we serve. Additionally, we are excited about the opportunity to expose these residents to work within rural Texas Community Mental Health Centers.”

The program’s 4-4-4 structure will train 16 residents when at full capacity. SHSU-COM will support the residency with curriculum development, faculty training, educational oversight and academic resources.

The residency is intentionally designed to meet the behavioral health workforce needs of East Texas,

Memorial Hospital, we are creating a supportive training environment that equips residents to serve where they are needed most.”

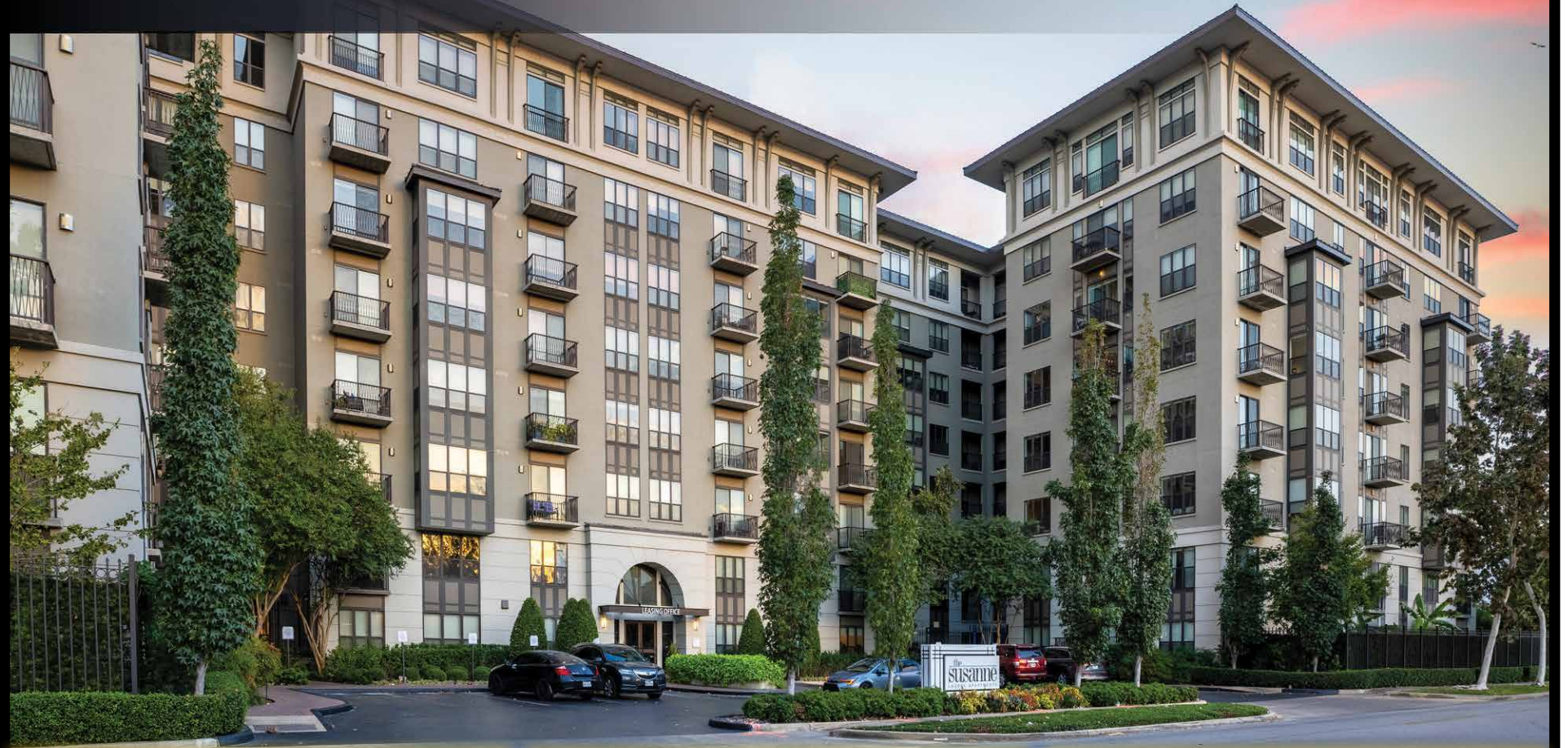
Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare, a longtime provider of mental health services for Walker, Montgomery and Liberty counties, brings decades of experience in community-based care. Huntsville Memorial Hospital will contribute clinical experiences that give residents insight into the needs seen in a community hospital setting. Together

“...Texas faces one of the most significant shortages of mental health providers in the nation.”

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## Legal Matters

### Critical Deadline to Update Notices of Privacy Practices Related to Substance Use Disorder (“SUD”) Information



By Iliana L. Peters, J.D.  
Rebecca Frigy Romine, J.D.  
Polsinelli, PC

In 2024, HHS, through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (“SAMHSA”) and the Office for Civil Rights (“OCR”), finalized amendments to 42 C.F.R. Part 2, to better align confidentiality rules for substance use disorder (“SUD”) records created by an SUD program that is subject to Part 2 (“SUD Records”). The rule implements Section 3221 of the CARES Act (2020), and HHS intends to simplify compliance and improve care coordination for SUD providers regulated by both Part 2 and

HIPAA. Additionally, HHS finalized SUD-related changes to the HIPAA regulations as part of OCR’s final rule, which was primarily, but not exclusively, related to the privacy of reproductive health information. While a Texas court vacated the changes to the HIPAA regulations related to reproductive health information, the changes related to SUD Records remain in effect. All HIPAA Covered Entities and Part 2 Programs must comply with the applicable changes by February 16, 2026.

#### Major Changes:

All HIPAA Covered Entities, healthcare providers who utilize HIPAA transactions, health plans, and healthcare clearinghouses, must revise their Notice of Privacy Practices (“NPP”) by February 16, 2026, whether or not such entities provide SUD treatment or are a Part 2 program.

The NPP revisions must address:

1. Uses and Disclosures Descriptions: A description of how the HIPAA Covered Entity may use and



2. Legal Proceedings Prohibition: A description of the prohibition on using or disclosing SUD Records subject to Part 2, or testimony relaying the content of such records, in any civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative proceedings against the patient without specific written consent or a court order.
3. Fundraising Communications: The right of a patient to opt out prior to receiving a communication if the Covered Entity intends to use or disclose SUD Records subject to Part 2 for fundraising for the benefit of the Covered Entity. In addition to the NPP revisions that all HIPAA Covered Entities must make, as above, the notice

obligations of a Part 2 Program (as set forth in the Part 2 regulations), either in conjunction with its HIPAA NPP or in a separate notice for Part 2 Programs not covered by HIPAA, were significantly expanded by the Part 2 Final Rule to include:

1. Required Headings: The final rule includes specific language to be included going forward for the NPP.
2. Other Uses and Disclosures Descriptions: A statement that a patient may provide a single consent for all future uses or disclosures for treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes (“TPO”) and the patient’s rights with regards to revoking such consent.

see Legal Matters...page 14



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# BREAKING BARRIERS

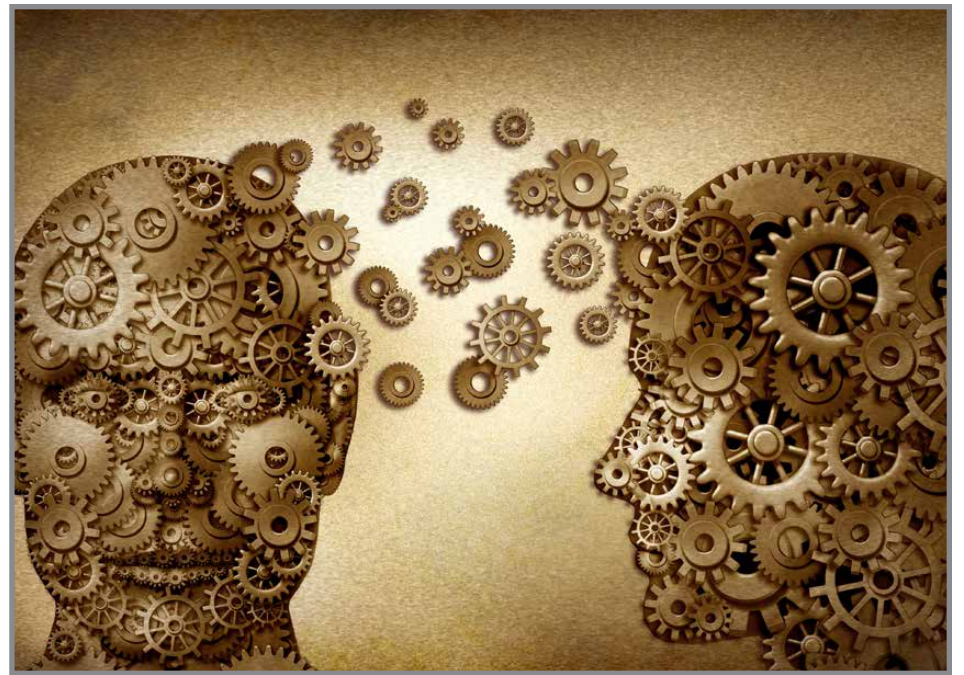
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# Alzheimer's Disease Can Hijack Communication Between Brain and Fat Tissue, Potentially Worsening Cardiovascular and Metabolic Health

**Houston Methodist Research Highlights  
Potential Link Between Neurodegeneration  
and Cardiovascular and Metabolic Disorders**



A recent study from Houston Methodist sheds light on how Alzheimer's disease may contribute to larger health issues by hijacking the body's ability to regulate its metabolism. Researchers have discovered that along with the negative effects an Alzheimer's diagnosis brings, the disease can also sabotage messages between nerves and blood vessels in fat tissue, which can worsen heart and metabolic conditions such as stroke, heart disease and diabetes.

These insights open new

avenues for research into how treating or preventing autonomic dysfunction might improve overall health outcomes for people with Alzheimer's

Stephen Wong, Ph.D., the John S. Dunn Presidential Distinguished Chair in Biomedical Engineering

The first-of-its-kind research, "Alzheimer's disease disrupts intradipose neurovascular contact," appears in the *Journal of Lipid Research* and highlights a previously underexplored aspect of Alzheimer's: its potential to cause dysfunction of

the autonomic (involuntary) nervous system extending beyond the brain. Led by Stephen Wong, Ph.D., the John S. Dunn Presidential Distinguished Chair in Biomedical Engineering, the study was conducted by his team at Houston Methodist, including key contributors Li Yang, Ph.D., a research associate, and Jianting Sheng, Ph.D., an assistant research professor of computational biology and mathematics in radiology.

Utilizing three-dimensional imaging and focusing on body

fat in mouse models, the study's high-resolution images provide a groundbreaking visual perspective revealing how the disease changes the structure of nerve and blood vessel bundles. These include the sympathetic nerves and blood vessels which play a critical role in regulating fat metabolism through hormonal and neural signaling.

see Alzheimer's ...page 14



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## Oncology Research

### Navigating the New Year with Cancer



By Alison M. Rome, M.D.,  
Medical Oncologist  
Texas Oncology

emotional wellbeing by prioritizing self-care, taking time to acknowledge your feelings, adjusting expectations to what is possible at the moment, and seeking support.

The emotional impact of living with a cancer diagnosis and treatment, fear of recurrence, and the daily stress of living with physical symptoms can create new or worsen preexisting emotional distress for cancer patients. Talk to your physician if you or a loved one are experiencing depression or anxiety. Consider whether getting counseling or mental health care, including via telemedicine, would be helpful, or try journaling and meditation.

#### The Power of Prevention

When it comes to physical health, preventive screenings are the single most effective way to detect cancer early, often before signs or symptoms occur. Skipping screenings can adversely impact your long-term health. Make a commitment this year

Each New Year's Eve, millions of Americans bid farewell to the past year and look forward to a fresh new start on January 1. It's the perfect time to take a comprehensive approach to health and wellness. Whether you have cancer already, have a loved one with cancer, or want to prevent cancer, here are three ways to hit reset on your health – and there's no better time to start than now.

#### The Importance of Emotional Wellbeing

The hustle and bustle of the holidays can take a toll on mental health, as can the sudden lack of activity once January arrives. Manage your



to schedule and keep your annual screenings and wellness check-ups. If you have a history of cancer in your family, consider genetic testing for yourself and your loved ones.

You can also make simple changes to your life that can drastically reduce your risk of cancer, such as limiting or avoiding alcohol consumption, quitting tobacco use, and working on nutrition and exercise.

In the new year, whether you have a love of cooking or just enjoy the convenience of grabbing extra snacks throughout the day, stock your pantry

with healthy staples and make it a point to plan meals on the weekends to set yourself up for a healthy week ahead. Keep your meal rotation fresh by trying a new recipe weekly and bulk up your soups and salads with hearty vegetables.

#### The Value of Friends and Family

Among the challenges of living with cancer are feelings of loneliness and isolation. For cancer patients who are worried about possible infections due to a compromised immune system,

see Oncology. ...page 14

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## Mental Health

### The Menninger Clinic Expands Access to Mental Health Care by Joining Blue Cross Blue Shield Network

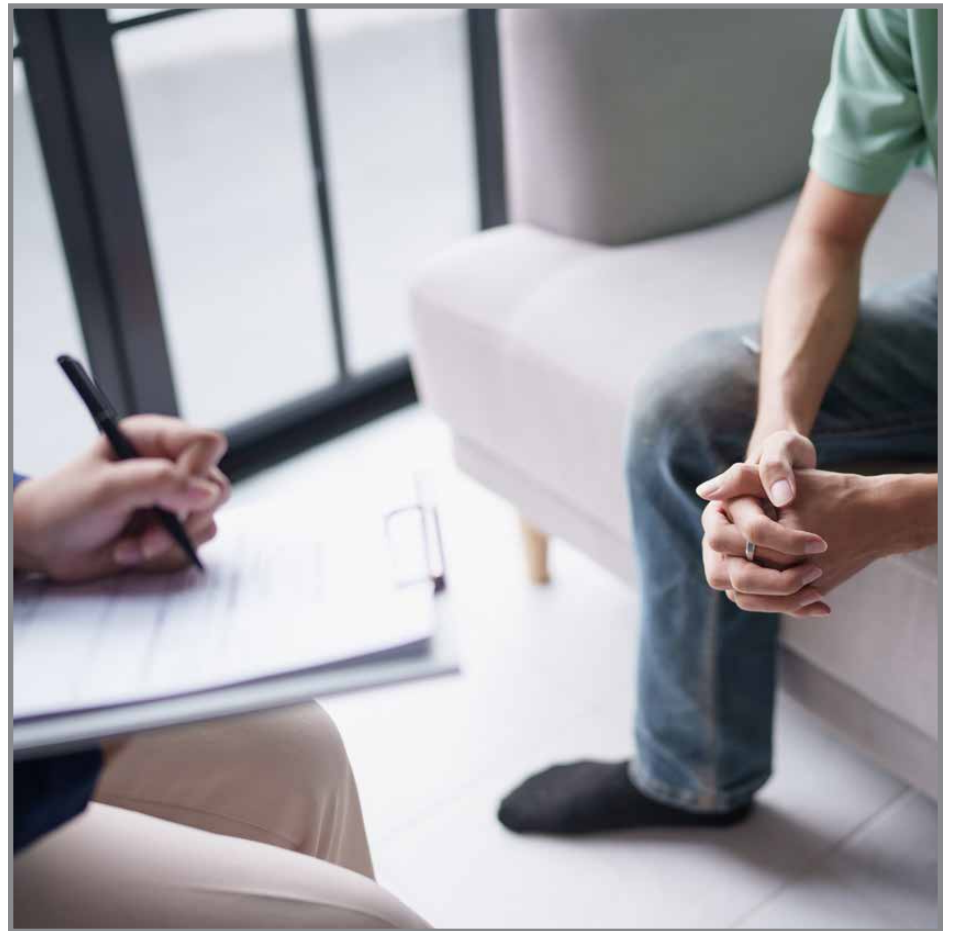
The Menninger Clinic, a nationally recognized leader in psychiatric care, today announced it is now an in-network provider with Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS). This new partnership marks a significant step in increasing access to high-quality mental health services for individuals in Texas and from across the country.

The move comes as demand continues to rise nationally for psychiatric services. By joining the Blue Cross Blue Shield network, Menninger is helping to alleviate long-standing barriers to care and ensuring that more individuals and families can receive treatment without facing the steep financial burden of out-of-network costs.

In response to the growing

need for mental health assessment and treatment, expanding access to mental health care has been a key initiative at Menninger. In addition to Blue Cross Blue Shield, Menninger is now in-network with several insurance providers including Aetna, Cigna, ComPsych, Magellan Health, and UnitedHealthcare.

“This is a transformative time in our 100-year history,” said Armando Colombo, president and CEO of The Menninger Clinic. “For decades, we have been known for our clinical excellence. Now, by becoming in-network with multiple insurers, we are taking a bold step to make our comprehensive mental health care services available to more people who need access to quality care.”



Menninger provides a continuum of evidence-based mental health services, including inpatient, outpatient, residential, and specialty programs for adolescents and adults. For more information about The

Menninger Clinic, its clinical staff and treatment options, visit [menningerclinic.com](http://menningerclinic.com) ♦



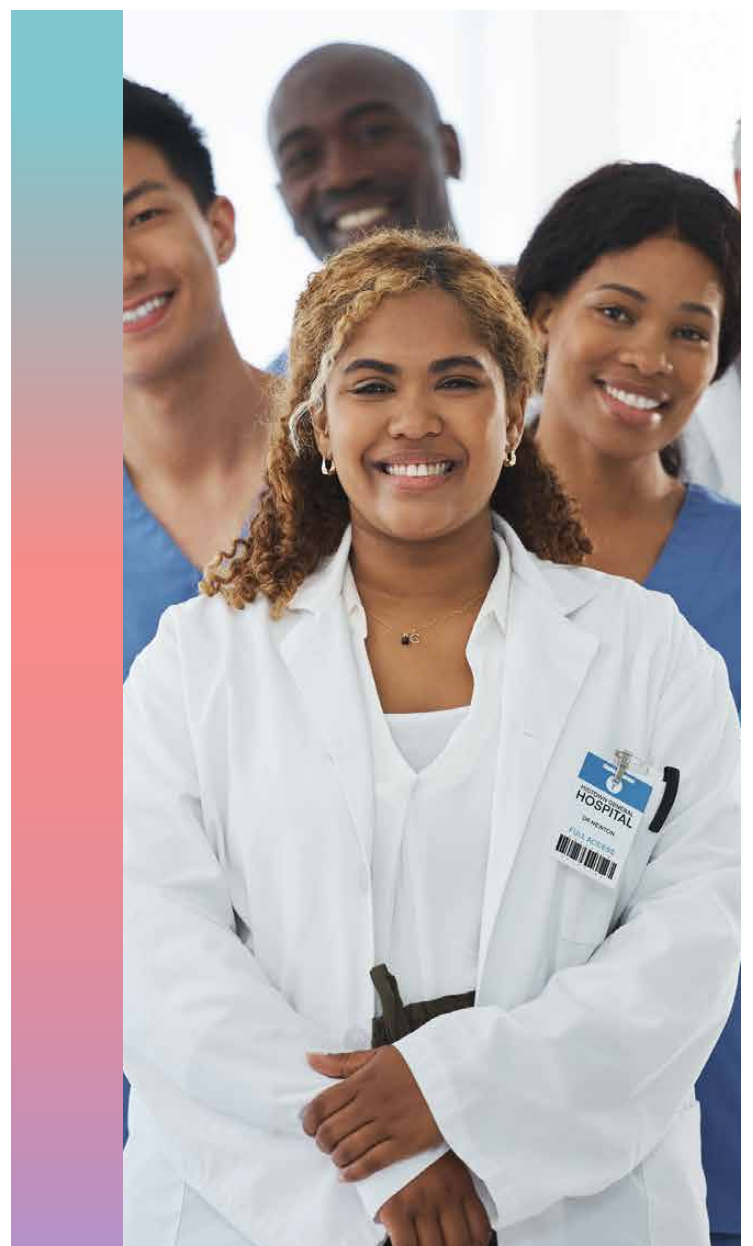
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## Healthy Heart

### Taylor Swift Honors Her Father with \$1 Million Gift to The American Heart Association

By American Heart Association

**The gift will accelerate American Heart Association efforts to prevent and treat heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States**

Heart disease and stroke claim more lives in the United States than all cancers and chronic lower respiratory diseases combined, affecting nearly half of all U.S. adults. The American Heart Association is working to change that and create a future where everyone everywhere can live healthier, longer lives. Global music superstar Taylor Swift is supporting that mission with a personal \$1 million contribution to advance ongoing scientific research, stronger prevention and treatment efforts, and expanded



access to life saving care for every community. Swift gave her gift in honor of her father, Scott Swift, whose heart condition she spoke about earlier this year.

“Taylor Swift’s remarkable generosity will create lasting change far beyond its financial value,” said Nancy Brown, chief executive officer of the American Heart Association. “Her family’s experience with cardiovascular disease is all too common, affecting nearly half of American adults. Her commitment to supporting her father will make so many others aware of the need to take their own heart health seriously, strengthen prevention efforts, and improve controllable risk factors—ultimately helping more people live longer, healthier lives.”

Swift has previously spoken about her family’s experience with cardiovascular disease on the New Heights Podcast. Stories like hers are powerful, offering strength, connection and healing for others facing similar challenges. The American Heart Association provides a free online platform, the Support Network, where patients, survivors and caregivers can share their experiences and support one another. This peer led community gives voice to every journey with the nation’s leading cause of death, helping build resilience and hope.

The American Heart Association stresses that preventive care is essential for lifelong heart health, urging early attention to family history and major risk factors, in addition to talking to your doctor. Routine screenings

help track blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, body weight, and lifestyle habits such as tobacco use, physical activity, and nutrition. Nearly 80% of heart disease can be prevented through consistent healthy behaviors, including a balanced diet, regular exercise, avoiding tobacco, and effective stress management. Understanding personal risks and making steady, heart healthy choices can reduce the chance of cardiovascular disease and improve overall well being.

“Taylor has long been associated with the symbol of heart hands. At the American Heart Association, we proudly use that same gesture to

see **Healthy Heart** . . .page 13

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## The Framework

### Sam Houston State University Expands Nursing Facilities at The Woodlands Center, Advances Workforce Innovation

By Staff

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) is expanding nursing education at The Woodlands Center, combining significant facility enhancements with a nationally recognized workforce innovation to help address the nursing shortage across the Greater Houston region and Texas.

Over the next several years, SHSU’s School of Nursing will increase student enrollment by 70

and Director of the School of Nursing. “Combined with SNAPPI, this expansion helps remove one of the biggest barriers to nursing education—the shortage of qualified faculty.”

A key component of SHSU’s strategy is the Shared Nurse Academic Practice Partnership Initiative (SNAPPI), an SHSU-led program that strengthens nursing education through partnerships with Houston-area healthcare systems.



Rendering courtesy of Sam Houston State University

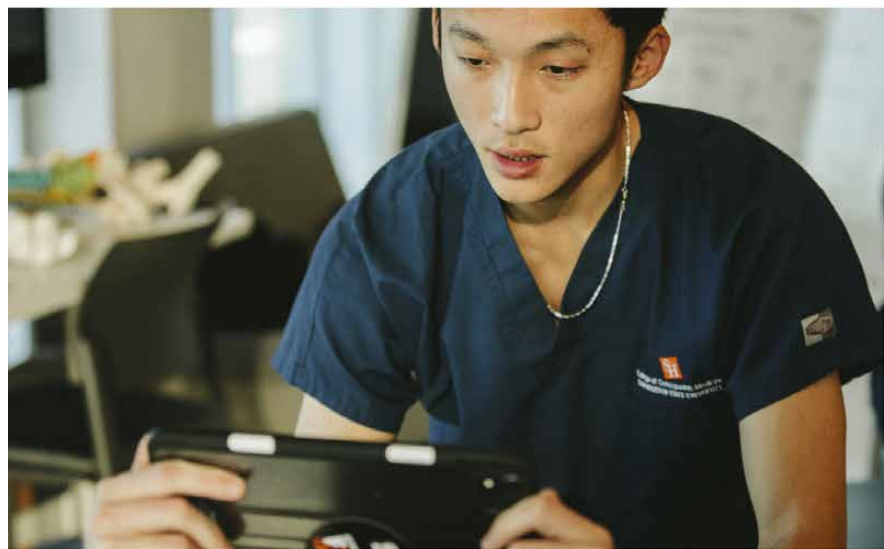
percent, expanding each cohort from 85 to 144 students. To support this growth, the TWC facility is undergoing a major renovation that will add state-of-the-art clinical simulation labs and active-learning classrooms, creating a more immersive and practice - ready learning environment. The renovation is currently scheduled for completion in Fall 2026.

“These facility upgrades at The Woodlands Center allow us to educate more students while maintaining the high-quality clinical training our partners and communities expect,” said Dr. Devon Berry, associate professor

SNAPPI enables hospital-employed nurses to serve as clinical instructors while remaining engaged in patient care, expanding training capacity and accelerating the pathway for students entering the workforce.

By pairing expanded facilities at The Woodlands Center with innovative clinical education models, SHSU is positioning itself as a leader in nursing workforce development—supporting hospitals, improving access to care, and preparing the next generation of nurses for the evolving healthcare landscape.◆

## WHERE MEDICAL AI MEETS



## REAL-WORLD HEALTHCARE

SHSU-COM is developing a Medical AI institute centered on innovation in diagnostics, emerging health technologies, regulatory science, and clinical research. Built on collaboration and real-world application, it reflects our commitment to meeting the evolving needs of healthcare.



## Study Uncovers Beneficial Relationship Between Gardening and Osteoarthritis

By Baylor College of Medicine

Gardening/yardwork is one of the few forms of leisure physical activity that people tend to do more as they age. Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis and a major cause of disability that also tends to occur more as people age. Baylor College of Medicine investigators were interested in studying the relationship between gardening/yardwork and osteoarthritis in an observation study. Their findings were published in *Clinical Rheumatology*.

“Gardening is an activity people are more likely to participate in as they get older, and age is a strong risk factor for osteoarthritis. Because of this, it is important to understand if gardening is harmful

or beneficial for knee health so we can know how to advise people who want to participate in this activity,” said Dr. Grace Lo, associate professor of immunology, allergy and rheumatology at Baylor.

Participants of this retrospective cross-sectional study were part of a large cohort called the Osteoarthritis Initiative (OAI). The cohort primarily started so investigators could look for biomarkers for knee osteoarthritis, and extra efforts were made to evaluate for symptoms and radiographic evidence of the condition in a rigorous and systematic way. Lo and the team were able to add a questionnaire detailing prior participation in leisure physical activity, as it was an unparalleled opportunity to look at the relationship between



lifetime physical activity and knee OA. Participants looked back at their lives to answer questions about gardening/yardwork throughout different timeframes: ages 12-18, 19-34, 35-49 and 50-plus.

“Those who gardened were less likely to have X-ray evidence of disease, knee pain or both. That was very reassuring from a knee health perspective,” Lo said.

The study also confirmed the report that as people get older,

they are more likely to garden. Additionally, they were able to look at the pattern of participation in gardening over a lifetime. They found that if a person picked up gardening/yardwork from ages 19-34, they were likely to continue it as they aged.

“This is an activity that has longevity to it, and people stick with it once they start. Even better

see Gardening . . .page 13



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## Rice Partners On Project Metis to Advance Global Leadership in Brain Health, Emerging Brain Economy

By Staff

Rice University, the University of Texas Medical Branch and Memorial Hermann Health System are proud to announce the formal launch of Project Metis, a groundbreaking initiative led by Center for Houston's Future to position the Houston-Galveston region as the global leader in brain health and the emerging brain economy.

Project Metis brings together world-class institutions, visionary leaders and strategic partners to drive human flourishing, innovation and economic

a holistic approach, and that's exactly what Rice offers with the Rice Brain Institute, with excellent researchers from a breadth of disciplines, spanning engineering and computing, natural sciences, social sciences and public policy. Working together, all of the Project Metis institutions will produce discoveries that benefit people here in Houston, across Texas and around the world."

In addition to Dittmar, the project's steering committee is chaired by Dr. Jochen Reiser, CEO and president of UTMB and CEO of the UTMB Health System, and Dr. David L. Callender, CEO



growth via a holistic focus on lifelong brain health.

Project Metis, a name inspired by the Greek goddess of wisdom and deep thought, reflects a commitment to advancing understanding, prevention and treatment across the full life cycle of the brain — from early development to healthy aging.

The initiative is chaired and supported by three pillars of the region, each with unique expertise and depth in brain health, including Rice's newly launched Rice Brain Institute, UTMB's Moody Brain Health Institute and Memorial Hermann's comprehensive neurology care spanning stroke, neurotrauma, brain health and more.

"Project Metis will make Houston a national and global leader in advancing lifelong brain health," said project chair Amy Dittmar, Rice's Howard R. Hughes Provost and executive vice president for academic affairs. "Brain health requires

of Memorial Hermann Health System. The committee will work alongside Center for Houston's Future CEO David Gow and his team to guide the initiative.

"Brain health is the defining frontier of this century, and UTMB is proud to lead it. Through the Moody Brain Health Institute, our scientists are unraveling the mechanisms of neurodegeneration, cognitive functioning and recovery. Our clinicians are part of this initiative to deliver advanced care to patients across the Texas Gulf Coast," Reiser said. "Project Metis gives us the opportunity to scale this work — uniting research, innovation and clinical excellence across institutions to improve lives and strengthen the emerging brain economy. Together, we can make the Houston-Galveston region the world's most vibrant hub for brain health discovery and care."

"Through our work, we see both

see Rice. ...page 13

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## Financial Forecast

### Start the Year Strong: 2026 Retirement Contribution Limits for Ages 45 - 60



By **Grace S. Yung, CFP**  
**Midtown Financial Group, LLC**

annual maximum.

In addition, the maximum overall contribution limit to employer retirement plans - including both employee and employer contributions - rises to \$72,000 for 2026. Income eligibility thresholds for IRA deductibility and Roth IRA participation also increased, expanding opportunities for many households.

#### Why These Limits Matter for Ages 45 - 60

For individuals in this age group, these increases may arrive at a very meaningful time. Many households experience peak earning years during this stage, making it an opportune period to accelerate retirement savings. The availability of catch-up contributions can help those who started late make significant progress. Even if retirement feels closer than

As we begin 2026, the IRS has finalized higher retirement plan contribution limits, giving individuals ages 45 - 60 valuable opportunities to build additional retirement savings during what is often a key accumulation phase. These are years when income may peak, retirement comes into sharper focus, and the planning decisions you make can meaningfully shape your financial future. Starting the year with intention - rather than scrambling at year-end - can help you take full advantage of the new limits.



#### 2026 Contribution Limits at a Glance

For 401(k), 403(b), and most 457(b) plans, the employee contribution limit is \$24,500 for 2026. If you are age 50 or older, you may contribute an additional \$8,000 in catch-up contributions, bringing your potential total to \$32,500. For those between ages 60 - 63, some plans allow an enhanced "super catch-up," which may increase total employee contributions up to \$35,750, depending on the plan's provisions.

For Traditional and Roth IRAs, the 2026 contribution limit is \$7,500, with an additional \$1,100 catch-up available for those age 50 and over, allowing a total contribution of \$8,600. IRA contribution limits apply across all IRAs combined, meaning contributions to a Traditional and Roth IRA together cannot exceed the

ever, you often still have 10 to 20 years of potential growth ahead - and the dollars saved early in the year can compound over more months.

This period of life is also when many individuals begin to think more strategically about taxes in retirement. Having the flexibility to use pretax or Roth contributions (when available) allows for planning around tax diversification, which can help create a more flexible retirement income strategy later.

#### How to Work Toward Maxing Out in 2026

Start by setting your annual goal and breaking it into per-paycheck contributions. For example, to reach the full \$24,500 401(k) limit, determine

## Healthy Heart

### Continued from page 7

honor all who have been affected—our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, spouses and so many others. My hope is that together we can raise our collective heart hands and drive meaningful change

against this disease, shaping a healthier future for generations to come,” said Brown.

Supporting the American Heart Association helps drive meaningful, long term improvements in heart health. The Association fights cardiovascular disease by funding research, educating the public, training

millions in CPR, setting medical guidelines, advocating for health policies, and running programs that expand access to care and promote healthy habits, especially in underserved areas. These systemic efforts are critical as risk factors like high blood pressure and obesity continue to rise. According to American Heart Association

projections, within 30 years, at least 6 in 10 Americans are expected to have cardiovascular disease. The work being done today is essential to alerting that trajectory and changing the future of health for everyone everywhere.◆

## Gardening

### Continued from page 9

now, we can see that it looks like it’s beneficial from an osteoarthritis perspective,” Lo said.

This report provides preliminary data that gardening/yardwork is certainly not harmful for knee osteoarthritis and suggests that it could be beneficial from an osteoarthritis and knee

symptom perspective. While signs of osteoarthritis can appear on X-rays in people’s 40s, many do not become symptomatic until their 60s. The way that osteoarthritis develops and evolves makes it challenging to study. Waiting 20 years to see symptoms develop is difficult to do in a clinical trial.

“Though this study was not designed to identify why gardening/yardwork might show a beneficial relationship with knee osteoarthritis,

there have been other studies that prove gardening/yardwork promotes health in other dimensions,” Lo said. “Gardening has been associated with better anxiety and depressive symptoms, better mood and greater socialization. And since there have been clinical trials that have shown anti-depressive medications are helpful in reducing pain in osteoarthritis, this could be a possible way that gardening/yardwork is beneficial. Further studies are needed to test if

this is a possibility.”

“This study was the first study to evaluate the relationship between gardening/yardwork and osteoarthritis. It is an observational study, so it will be important if similar findings are seen in other cohorts of patients that have this type of information collected in their participants. This first look is very encouraging, and it looks like gardening is beneficial for knee health,” Lo said. ◆

## Rice

### Continued from page 10

the immense human toll of brain-related illness and the tremendous potential of early intervention, coordinated care and long-term prevention. That’s why this bold new initiative matters so much and why we at Memorial Hermann are so proud to play a role,” Callender said.

Rice is rapidly emerging as a powerhouse in brain science and neuroengineering. This fall, the university launched the Rice Brain Institute — uniting more than 65 experts across engineering, neuroscience, cognitive science, ethics and policy to accelerate breakthroughs in brain health — and opened the Amyloid Mechanism and Disease Center to advance discoveries in Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and related

diseases. Rice also signed a landmark partnership with the Paris Brain Institute, linking Houston’s growing innovation ecosystem with Europe’s leading neuroscience hub to co-develop solutions for neurological and psychiatric disorders. This momentum comes as Texas voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 14, establishing a \$3 billion statewide investment to create the Dementia Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, the largest state-funded initiative in the nation focused on dementia research and prevention.

The Center for Houston’s Future, a 25-year-old nonprofit focused on the region’s future, has a long and successful record of bringing parties together to collaborate on visionary strategic planning and action across disciplines from health care to energy to the arts.

“Now is exactly the right time for Project Metis and the Houston-Galveston

region is exactly the right place,” Gow said. “Texas voters, by approving the state-funded Dementia Prevention Institute, have shown a strong commitment to brain health as scientific advances continue daily. The initiative aims to harness the Houston region’s unique strengths: its concentration of leading medical and academic institutions, a vibrant innovation ecosystem and a history of entrepreneurial leadership in health and life sciences.”

Other early steering committee members include Lime Rock Resources, bp and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. HKS and American Psychiatric Association Foundation are also Project Metis supporters.

Tentative early plans for Project Metis include:

- Launch working teams focused on brain health across all life stages (early years, workplace years and healthy

aging), science/medical advances and innovation and commercialization.

- Develop a regional brain health index to track progress and equity.
- Activating and scaling by implanting pilot projects in areas such as clinical care, education and workplace wellness; building an ecosystem; and sharing Houston’s progress and learnings at major international forums, including the World Economic Forum and the U.N. General Assembly.
- Communicating and inspiring via high-visibility events and other thought leadership opportunities.

“Project Metis is more than an initiative — it’s a movement to unlock human potential. By uniting science, innovation and collaboration, we aim to make Houston the epicenter of brain health for generations to come,” Gow said.◆

## Financial

### Continued from page 12

the amount needed per month or per pay period and automate it. If you are age 50 or older, factor in your catch-up contributions from the beginning instead of waiting until later in the year.

If your employer offers a match, ensure you at least contribute enough to receive the full match, as this

is essentially additional retirement funding contributed on your behalf. If you are also eligible to contribute to an IRA, coordinating IRA contributions alongside your workplace plan may enhance both tax benefits and long-term planning flexibility.

A mid-year review is wise. Income, job status, or goals may change, and adjusting midstream can help keep you aligned with your objectives. Finally, be aware that some higher-income earners may have specific Roth requirements

for catch-up contributions in employer plans beginning in 2026.

### Start Early, Stay Intentional

For individuals ages 45 - 60, the expanded 2026 retirement contribution limits offer an important opportunity to strengthen long-term financial security. Starting early, contributing consistently, and reviewing periodically can help you capture every available dollar of tax-advantaged savings. For personalized planning - including coordinating contributions,

understanding eligibility rules, and balancing competing financial goals - consider working with a Certified Financial Planner professional to build a thoughtful strategy aligned with your future.◆

## New Psychiatry

### Continued from page 1

where access to psychiatric care is limited. Research consistently shows that physicians often remain in the communities where they complete residency training, making this program an important investment in long-term regional access to care.

“Strengthening behavioral health care in our communities requires long-term investment in training and education,” Mohr said. “This residency program builds on SHSU-COM’s mission to increase the physician workforce in our region and prepare

physicians who are committed to serving the people of Texas.” ♦

## Oncology

### Continued from page 5

spending time outdoors might be a good option. Or if the weather is too cold, reach out to a loved one and ask for regular phone calls or video chats. By finding the strength to reach out for help, you may learn that others in your social circle are struggling too.

Isolation can also take a toll on caregivers. If you are taking care of a loved one with cancer or another illness, be sure to set aside time for yourself and find support in your social network or through support groups online or in your local community.

While cancer, cancer care, and survivorship can be life-changing, we hope that you can look forward to good things to come in 2026. ♦

## Legal Matters

### Continued from page 3

- Other Specific Statements: Statements, when relevant, related to the potential re-disclosure of Part 2 Records by recipients of such records pursuant to a general consent to disclose for TPO and use of such records for fundraising purposes. As well as statements related to the Part 2 Program’s duties, contact information, and the effective date of the notice.
- Patient Rights: Statements related to a patient’s rights with respect to their Part 2 Records, which include the right to request restrictions, file complaints, and the right to an accounting of disclosures.

#### Other Changes Impact Part 2 Programs:

The Part 2 Final Rule included other changes that are relevant

specifically to Part 2 Programs. Such changes include, but are not limited to:

- Permitting a Part 2 Program to obtain a global consent for the use, disclosure, and redisclosure of SUD Records for TPO purposes, along with requirements related to including such global consent with all disclosures for TPO that are made in reliance on such consent;
- Extending the HIPAA Breach Notification Rule requirements to a Part 2 Program, whether or not the Part 2 Program is a HIPAA Covered Entity; and
- Requiring that the Part 2 Program permits a patient to request restrictions on the use and disclosure of their Part 2 Record, including when the patient has signed a global consent for TPO

uses and disclosures.

#### Enforcement Risks:

Failure to comply with Part 2 and the HIPAA regulations may result in civil monetary penalties or other enforcement actions by HHS OCR, which has authority to issue subpoenas requiring attendance, testimony, and the production of documents related to an investigation or compliance review.

Organizations should review and update their NPPs, policies and procedures, staff training, and compliance protocols well before the 2026 deadline. Proactive engagement with counsel can help ensure alignment with both HIPAA and Part 2 requirements and mitigate potential enforcement risks. ♦

## Alzheimer’s

### Continued from page 4

“By disrupting the connection between the nervous system and fat tissue, the disease may impair the body’s ability to manage energy,” Li said.

This disturbance could help explain why individuals with Alzheimer’s often experience issues

such as stroke, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and other health troubles alongside cognitive decline.

“These insights open new avenues for research into how treating or preventing autonomic dysfunction might improve overall health outcomes

for people with Alzheimer’s,” said Wong and Sheng. ♦

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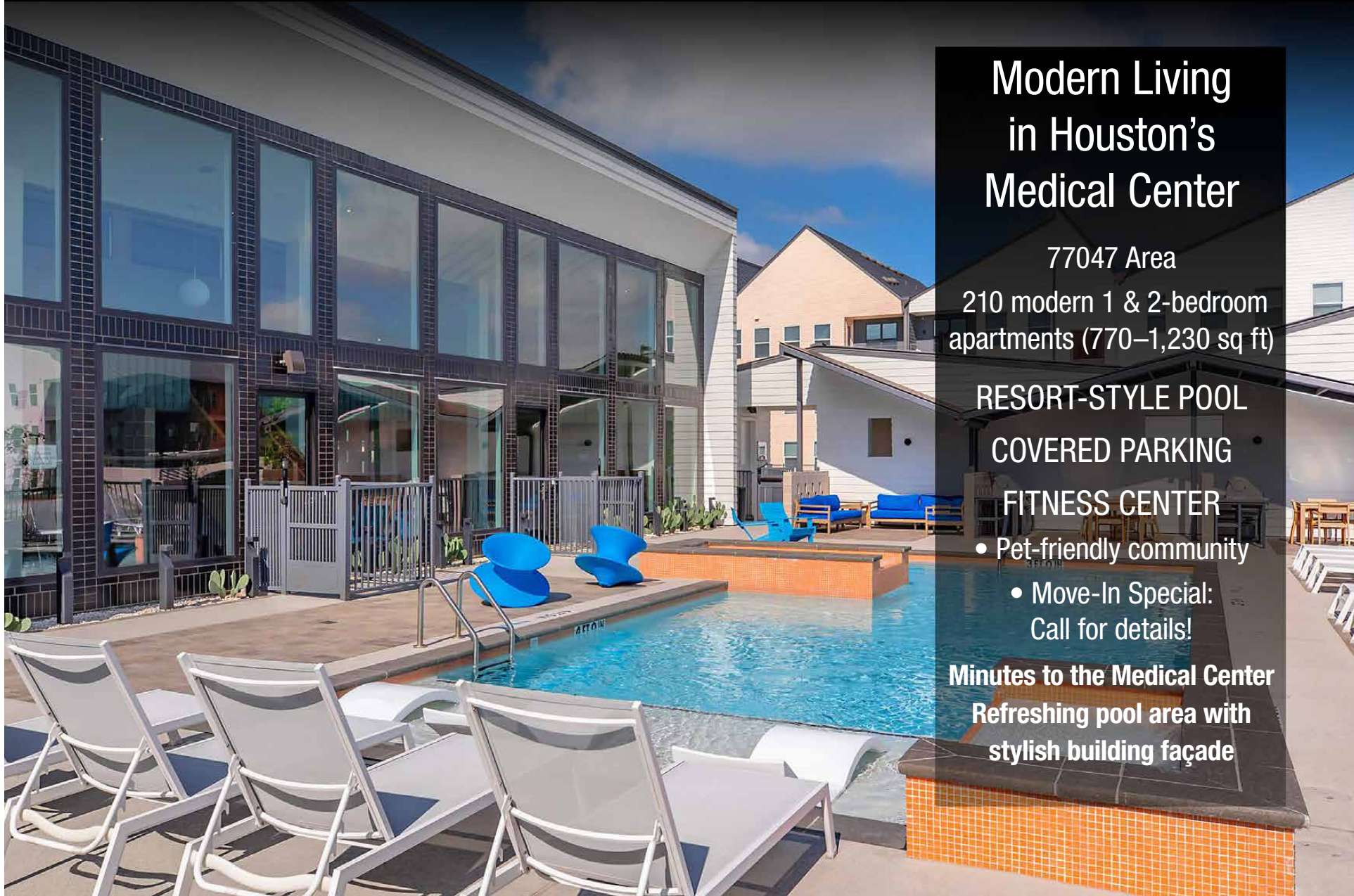
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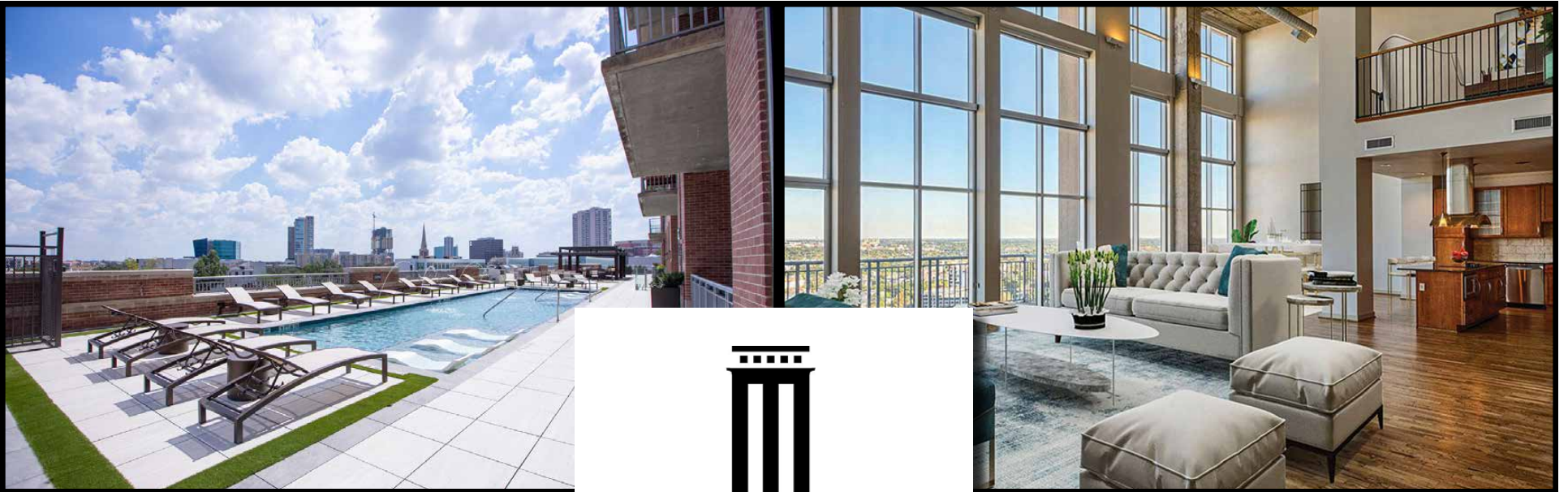
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