



# NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE INTERNATIONAL SPINE SYMPOSIUM

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026  
7 AM TO 4 PM

Hyatt Centric Chicago Magnificent Mile  
633 North St. Clair Street  
Second Floor, Lakeshore Ballroom West  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

*Sponsored by the Northwestern Medicine Center for Spine Health at  
Northwestern Memorial Hospital*

# Northwestern Medicine International Spine Symposium

Join us for an engaging Continuing Medical Education (CME) program designed to elevate your expertise in spine surgery. This event brings together world-class surgeons and thought leaders to showcase the transformative power of enabling technologies—such as robotics, navigation systems, and advanced imaging—in modern surgical practice. Attendees will experience dynamic presentations and interactive discussions that highlight how these innovations are redefining precision, efficiency, and patient safety in the operating room.

Beyond technology demonstrations, this program offers a unique opportunity to connect with peers, share best practices, and gain actionable insights that can immediately enhance your clinical approach. Through real-world case studies and expert-led sessions, you will explore strategies for integrating cutting-edge tools into your workflow, improving outcomes, and staying ahead of emerging trends. Don't miss this chance to be part of a collaborative learning experience that is shaping the future of spine surgery.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

After attending this educational activity, participants should be able to:

1. Comprehend the challenges and opportunities of enabling technology in spine surgery.
2. Identify procedures and techniques that can leverage enabling technology in the operating room.
3. Analyze how current and future innovations can impact patient care and research in spine surgery.
4. Integrate emerging technologies in spine surgery, including minimally invasive techniques, robotics, and AI.

For more information, please contact **Tiffany McReynolds**, Continuing Medical Education Program Manager, [Tiffany.McReynolds@nm.org](mailto:Tiffany.McReynolds@nm.org).

## Program Course Directors



**Ali A. Baaj, MD**

*Professor of Neurological Surgery  
Vice-Chair, International Outreach  
Director, Innovation & Technology in Spine Surgery  
Director, Fellowship Program in Spine Surgery*

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine



**Nader S. Dahdaleh, MD, MS**

*Chief of Neurosurgery,  
Northwestern Medicine Western Region  
Co-Director, Northwestern Medicine Center for Pain and Spine Health in Bloomingdale  
Vice-Chair for Education,*

*Department of Neurological Surgery  
Professor of Neurological Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery*  
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine



**Tyler R. Koski, MD**

*Medical Director, Spine Surgery  
Co-Director, Northwestern Medicine Center for Spine Health  
Professor of Neurological Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery*

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine



**Alpesh A. Patel, MD, MBA**

*Professor & Vice Chair, Strategy  
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery  
Co-Director, Northwestern Center for Spine Health  
Division Director, Orthopaedic Spine Surgery*

*Program Director, The Northwestern Spine Fellowship  
Professor of Neurological Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery*  
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

# International Guest Faculty

## **Omar Alnori, MD**

*Orthopedic and Spine Consultant*  
Hamad Medical Corporation, Doha, Qatar  
AO Spine GCC Chairman

## **Saleh S. Baeesa, MD**

*Professor of Neurological Surgery*  
*Neurosciences Department*  
King Faisal Specialist Hospital &  
Research Centre  
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

## **Daipayan Guha, MD, PhD**

*Assistant Professor of*  
*Neurological Surgery*  
*Adult Spinal Surgery*  
*Co-Director, McMaster Combined*  
*Adult Spinal Surgery Fellowship*  
*Associate Member,*  
*Biomedical Engineering*  
McMaster University.  
Hamilton, Ontario

## **Avelino Parajón, MD**

*Head of Spine Section,*  
*Department of Neurosurgery*  
Ramón y Cajal University Hospital,  
Madrid, Spain

# National Guest Faculty

## **Muhammad M. Abd-El-Barr, MD, PhD**

*Professor of Neurological Surgery*  
*Vice Chair, International Affairs*  
*Chief, Endoscopic Spine Surgery*  
Duke University and Duke University  
Health System

## **Christopher S. Ahuja, MD, PhD**

*Clinical Assistant Professor of*  
*Neurological Surgery*  
Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine

## **Matthew W. Colman, MD**

*Associate Professor of*  
*Orthopaedic Surgery*  
Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine

## **Srikanth N. Divi, MD**

*Assistant Professor of Neurological*  
*Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery*  
Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine

## **Najib El Tecle, MD**

*Assistant Professor of*  
*Neurological Surgery*  
Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine

## **Richard G. Fessler, MD, PhD**

*Professor of Neurological Surgery*  
Rush University Medical Center

## **Wellington K. Hsu, MD**

*Vice-Chair of Research*  
*Professor of Neurological Surgery and*  
*Orthopaedic Surgery*  
Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine

## **Hanna Kemeny, MD, MBA**

*Department of Neurological Surgery*  
Northwestern Memorial Hospital

## **Allison B. Kessler, MD, MS**

*Section Chief, Renée Crown Center for*  
*Spinal Cord Innovation*  
Shirley Ryan AbilityLab  
*Henry and Monika Betts Medical Student*  
*Education Chair*  
*Associate Professor of Physical Medicine*  
*and Rehabilitation*  
*Associate Spinal Cord Injury*  
*Fellowship Director*  
Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine

## **Eric O. Klineberg, MD, MS**

*Vice Chair, Orthopaedic Spine Surgery*  
*Chief, Orthopaedic*  
*Spine Surgery*  
*Milton "Chip" Routt Endowed Chair of*  
*Spinal Surgery*  
*Professor of Neurological Surgery and*  
*Orthopaedic Surgery*  
UTHealth Houston  
McGovern Medical School

## **Michael J. Lee, MD**

*Professor and Vice Chair of*  
*Orthopaedic Surgery and*  
*Rehabilitation Medicine*  
*Professor of Neurological Surgery*  
The University of Chicago Medicine

## **Ankit I. Mehta, MD**

*Chief, Spine Surgery*  
*Director, Spinal Oncology*  
*Associate Professor of*  
*Neurological Surgery*  
*Associate Residency Program Director*  
*Department of Neurological Surgery*  
University of Illinois Hospital and  
Health Sciences System

## **Ronjon Paul, MD**

*Orthopaedic Spine Surgeon*  
Endeavor Health Spine Surgery

## **Daniel M. Sciubba, MD, MBA**

*Chair, Neurosurgery*  
North Shore University Hospital/  
Northwell Health  
Long Island Jewish Medical Center/  
Northwell Health  
*Chair, Neurosurgery*  
Donald and Barbara Zucker School of  
Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell  
*Co-Director of the Institute for Neurology*  
*and Neurosurgery*  
Northwell Health

## **Patrick A. Sugrue, MD**

*Medical Director of Neuro Spine*  
*(Midwest Region)*  
Advocate Health

## **Kevin N. Swong, MD**

*Assistant Professor of*  
*Neurological Surgery*  
Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine

# Agenda

# Friday, May 8, 2026

<b>7:00 am</b>	<b>Breakfast and Registration</b>
<b>7:25 am</b>	<b>Course Directors Welcome</b> Ali A. Baaj, MD, Nader S. Dahdaleh, MD, MS, Tyler R. Koski, MD, and Alpesh A. Patel MD, MBA
<b>7:30 am</b>	<b>Is Enabling Technology Necessary for Craniovertebral Junction Surgery?</b> Panel: Ali A. Baaj, MD, Nader S. Dahdaleh, MD, MS, and Muhammad M. Abd-El-Barr, MD, PhD
<b>8:00 am</b>	<b>Cervical Arthroplasty: How, Why, and Why Not?</b> Panel: Wellington K. Hsu, MD, Srikanth N. Divi, MD, and Alpesh A. Patel, MD, MBA
<b>8:30 am</b>	<b>When a Cervical Degen Case is Actually Deformity</b> Ali A. Baaj, MD
<b>8:50 am</b>	<b>Cervical Laminoplasty vs Fusion: What Do the Data Show?</b> Alpesh A. Patel, MD, MBA
<b>9:10 am</b>	<b>Updates on Spinal Cord Injury: Innovative Treatments and Research</b> Allison B. Kessler, MD, MS
<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>9:45 am</b>	<b>Thoracic Disc Disease</b> Panel: Muhammad M. Abd-El-Barr, MD, PhD, Daipayan Guha, MD, PhD, Michael J. Lee, MD, and Ankit I. Mehta, MD
<b>10:15 am</b>	<b>Metastatic Disease to the Spine: Evidence-Based Treatment</b> Panel: Christopher S. Ahuja, MD, PhD, Nader S. Dahdaleh, MD, MS, and Daniel M. Sciubba, MD, MBA
<b>10:45 am</b>	<b>Prehabilitation and Bone Optimization in Adult Deformity Surgery</b> Tyler R. Koski, MD
<b>11:05 am</b>	<b>Technology in Adult Degenerative Deformity Surgery</b> Panel: Ali A. Baaj, MD, Omar Alnori, MD, Eric O. Klineberg, MD, MS, and Tyler R. Koski, MD
<b>11:35 am</b>	<b>Minimally Invasive Deformity Surgery</b> Panel: Najib El Tecl, MD, Omar Alnori, MD, Daipayan Guha, MD, PhD, Michael J. Lee, MD, and Matthew W. Colman, MD
<b>12:05 pm</b>	<b>Posterior vs Anterior vs Lateral Approaches in the Lumbar Spine</b> Panel: Ali A. Baaj, MD, Saleh S. Baeesa, MD, Avelino Parajón, MD, Ronjon Paul, MD, and Hanna Kemeny, MD, MBA
<b>12:35 pm</b>	<b>Lunch Presentation: Innovation in Spine Surgery</b> Richard G. Fessler, MD, PhD
<b>1:15 pm</b>	<b>Motion Preservation in the Lumbar Spine</b> Panel: Matthew W. Colman, MD, Daipayan Guha, MD, PhD, Patrick W. Sugrue, MD, and Kevin N. Swong, MD
<b>1:45 pm</b>	<b>TLIF Surgery: What it Can and Cannot Do</b> Avelino Parajón, MD
<b>2:05 pm</b>	<b>Innovations in Intradural Spine Surgery</b> Saleh S. Baeesa, MD
<b>2:25 pm</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>2:40 pm</b>	<b>Navigation and Robotics in Spine Surgery</b> Panel: Christopher S. Ahuja, MD, PhD, Ali A. Baaj, MD, Saleh S. Baeesa, MD, and Eric O. Klineberg, MD, MS
<b>3:10 pm</b>	<b>Spine Endoscopy: Cutting Edge Indications and Techniques</b> Muhammad M. Abd-El-Barr, MD, PhD
<b>3:30 pm</b>	<b>AI-Driven Tools in Practice and in Surgery</b> Panel: Najib El Tecl, MD, Daipayan Guha, MD, PhD, and Hanna Kemeny, MD, MBA
<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>Closing Remarks and Adjournment</b>



## Program Location

The program will be held at the **Hyatt Centric Chicago Magnificent Mile**, located on Northwestern's campus, at 633 North St. Clair Street, 2nd Floor, Lakeshore Ballroom West, Chicago, Illinois.

## Directions and Parking

The Hyatt Centric Chicago Magnificent Mile offers **valet parking**. Additionally, Northwestern Medicine offers discounted parking in the Parking A garage at 222 East Huron Street and the Parking B garage at 259 East Erie Street.

## Hotel Accommodations

We have arranged a room block with discounted rates at the Hyatt Centric Magnificent Mile, conveniently located on Northwestern's campus. To make a hotel reservation, please visit [this link](#). We encourage you to secure your reservations as soon as possible to ensure availability.

## Audience

This program is tailored for spine surgeons, surgical trainees, advanced practice providers (APPs) and nursing professionals committed to excellence in spine care. Whether you are refining your expertise or expanding your knowledge of enabling technologies, this course offers valuable insights for every member of the spine surgery team.

## Registration Fees

### *Early Bird (through February 28)*

NM Physician: \$80

External Physician: \$100

NM Nurse & Allied Health: \$35

External Nurse & Allied Health: \$50

Trainee or Student: \$0

### *After March 1*

NM Physician: \$100

External Physician: \$120

NM Nurse & Allied Health: \$45

External Nurse & Allied Health: \$60

Trainee or Student: \$15

## Registration Procedure

To register online, please visit our Cloud CME portal [here](#).

## Accreditation Statement

The Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

## Credit Designation Statement

The Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine designates this educational activity for a maximum of 7.25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

## American Board of Surgery Continuous Certification Program

Successful completion of this CME activity enables the learner to earn credit toward the CME requirement of the American Board of Surgery's Continuous Certification program. It is the CME activity provider's responsibility to submit learner completion information to ACCME for the purpose of granting ABS credit.

*ABS CME credits will be submitted to the boards within 3 months of the conclusion of the activity.*

