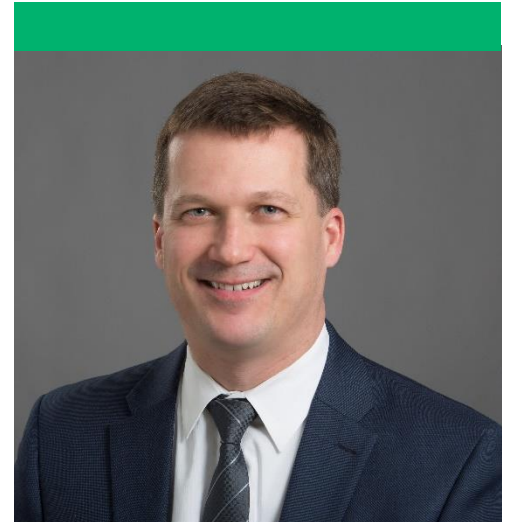




James J. Conners, MD, MS, FAHA

The Jean Schweppe Armour Professor of
Neurology



Advancement of Medicine

In 2025-2026, the Department of Neurological Sciences continued to thrive due in no small part to your generosity. Your support has greatly aided me over the past year in my positions as chairman of the department and co-director of the neurosciences service line. I have been able to support junior faculty in their research pursuits as well as the work of our statistician and research coordinators.

A highlight of the past year was a continuing medical education event that brought neurologists, trainees and nurses to Rush for a two-day conference to share updates on neurological therapeutics. The conference, enabled by your generosity, was very well attended and helped us share our expertise and fulfill our educational mission.

Research

The endowment has also enabled us to support faculty members with bridge funding as they apply for competitive grants. **Liudmila Romanova, PhD**, is awaiting funding on two projects: an R21 "Age-Related Remodeling of Meningeal Extracellular Matrix" and an R01 "Arachnoid barrier in Alzheimer's disease." **Rajeev K. Garg, MD, MS**, has also submitted to the National Institutes of Health, or NIH, for funding for his project, "Silent Brain Infarcts in Spontaneous Intracerebral Hemorrhage as a Prognostic Biomarker for Vascular Contributions to Cognitive Impairment and Dementia (VCID)." Without support, these two faculty members would not have been able to dedicate their time to these important research endeavors.

In the world of stroke care, another manuscript titled "Language discordance in telestroke thrombolysis recommendations" has been published, enabling us to share our findings from research supported by the Schweppe endowment.



In the current uncertain environment for government support of research, endowments are more crucial than ever for us to continue our research in the neurosciences.

Faculty

As department chairman, it is critical that I support my academic faculty in their pursuits. One important area is in faculty affairs and promotions. With funding from the endowment, I am able to give time to our vice chair of faculty affairs, our vice chair of research, and our advisory committee chair to accomplish their necessary work.

Education

It is becoming more and more essential to fully grasp AI in a health care setting. In 2025, I completed a certificate course titled "Artificial Intelligence in Health Care" at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management. This was an excellent opportunity. Since that time, we have developed an AI and innovation working group within the department. Our goal is to help foster new and exciting projects that will incorporate AI into our work to benefit our patients and faculty.

The Year Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

We will continue to support junior faculty who are in the process of grant writing and the ongoing educational efforts of the department.

With Gratitude

Thank you so much. Without you, we would not be able to fulfill the academic mission of the Department of Neurological Sciences.