



Kerstin Stenson, MD

The Carole B. and Gordon I. Segal Professor of Women's Cancer Issues

Advancement of Medicine

In 2025, I continued to work with the Rush Head and Neck Cancer Team on several fronts.



Clinically, we continue to be the busiest head and neck cancer program in the city. The head and neck cancer program holds 20.1% of the market share in the surrounding eight-county market. These numbers not only reflect our effective and strategic patient access endeavors, but they are a testament to the exceptional quality of the care given to our patients.

We remain a central tertiary and quaternary referral center for our colleagues in the community to manage the most complex patients. My colleagues have extraordinary skills, clinical acumen and compassion. I am grateful and proud to be a member of a team that clearly impacts the care of every patient, every day.

A Women in Otolaryngology dinner was held in November 2025. The event featured a guest speaker from the Fertility Centers of Illinois and was organized by **Vanessa Stubbs, MD**, one of our exceptional fellowship-trained head and neck surgeons. Many women are deterred from a head and neck cancer career because of real and perceived work/life balance concerns. Family planning and education for women early in their career is critical to attract the brightest and best candidates for an academic career, especially in head and neck cancer where women are historically under-represented. These topics encourage and support women in their overall missions of research and program development.

We will continue to fund student, resident and fellow travel for regional and national cancer meetings. Learners' use of these funds promotes scholarship, networking and other opportunities that form professional and academic growth.



Publication Highlights — Abbreviated

- Masliah J, Neerumalla S, Metwally A, Kazen A, Dua SG, Stubbs V, Bhayani M, Stenson K, Wrenn S, Al-Khudari S. Anatomical Predictors of Aerodigestive Symptoms in Substernal Goiters. *Head Neck*. 2025 Dec 4. doi: 10.1002/hed.70123. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41346069.

The Year Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

In my next year as the Carol B. and Gordon I. Segal Professor of Women's Cancer Issues, I will continue to work on the sentinel node project, "Post-Injection Site Pain between Technetium Sulfur Colloid and Technetium Tilmanocept in Oral Cavity Squamous Cell Carcinoma Cancer Patients Undergoing Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy." The IRB has been submitted, and we hope to start recruiting patients this year.

With Gratitude

Mr. and Mrs. Segal, I continue to be amazed and humbled by your generosity. My gratitude, deep appreciation, and respect for your humanity and dedication to Rush's mission is truly difficult to express. *Thank you*. I will continue to do my utmost to fulfill the intent of your endowment and strive to utilize them in the most impactful way I am can to benefit our cancer patients.