

Reflection after attending the 2025 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium

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Receiving the Jan R. Cloyde Legacy Award provided essential support for me to attend the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium (SABCS), the world's leading meeting in breast oncology. As a fourth-year medical student aiming to pursue a physician-scientist career in hematology-oncology, SABCS offered an unparalleled environment to present my work, learn from the field's most influential leaders, and identify clear next steps to advance my research trajectory.

At SABCS, I presented my research as a poster spotlight, which created the ideal setting for in-depth, high-yield discussions. I received thoughtful feedback on study design, endpoints, and how best to contextualize patient-reported outcomes in the evolving landscape of breast cancer surveillance. Several experts offered concrete recommendations to strengthen the rigor and clarity of our analyses and suggested additional angles to improve the translational impact of this work. These conversations were immediately actionable and will directly inform refinement of our current project as well as the direction of future studies.

Beyond improving the science, SABCS significantly advanced my career development through mentorship and professional connection-building. I had the opportunity to meet breast oncology experts from across the country, including clinician-investigators working in liquid biopsy, minimal residual disease (MRD), and survivorship research. These interactions broadened my perspective on how similar work is being implemented across institutions and sparked ideas for potential multi-site collaborations, new study questions, and future training opportunities. Importantly, SABCS also helped me identify the specific mentorship relationships and research communities that will be critical as I transition into residency and continue developing a focused research niche.

Finally, SABCS was deeply inspiring on a personal level. Hearing female leaders in breast oncology share their career journeys: how they built impactful programs, navigated setbacks, and stayed grounded in patient-centered goals, strengthened my commitment to becoming an academic oncologist dedicated to improving both outcomes and quality of life for women with cancer. I will begin internal medicine residency in 2026. The Jan R. Cloyde Legacy Award enabled me to participate in SABCS at an early stage of training, accelerating my growth as a researcher and helping lay the foundation for a long-term career integrating clinical care with meaningful, patient-centered translational research.