



AANS 2026 SAN ANTONIO



MEDICAL STUDENT GUIDE

A Special Welcome to #AANS2026

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On behalf of the AANS leadership and the Early to Mid-Career Neurosurgeons (E2M) Committee, welcome to San Antonio and the 94th Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS). This year's theme, *Neurosurgery Frontiers: Innovation, Collaboration, Transformation*, captures the spirit of our specialty's evolution. We are very excited to have a large cohort of young individuals joining us this year, and we have assembled this guide to help orient you to the meeting, the organization, and getting the most out of your time here.

This guide has 3 core elements: a pair of introductory essays; a detailed overview of #AANS2026 offerings tailored for students and other trainees, highlighting high-yield elements from the program; and an appendix containing quick reference resources such as a map of the meeting venues, resources for AANS involvement, and an introduction to our committee members.

Tips for Getting the Most Out of #AANS2026:

- In terms of the academic program, the "Plenary Sessions" are the true highlight, featuring a mix of high-quality scientific presentations and top-tier guest speakers, as well as special talks from members of the society leadership and invited guests.
- In general, morning sessions feature invited speakers selected by the scientific planning committee for their deep expertise on a particular topic, while afternoon sessions are typically abstract presentations, original research being presented by the student, resident, or faculty investigator.
- On the social side, the Sip, Savor and Showcase (formerly Opening Reception) in the Exhibit Hall is a top networking opportunity. Also check out receptions sponsored by the AANS/CNS joint sections; by groups whose interests are aligned with yours (e.g., the Women in Neurological Surgery [WINS] reception for female trainees); and of course, our E2M reception.
- The Exhibit Hall is a unique space, and certainly worth exploring. Most of what you will encounter here is sponsored by vendors who have paid a fee for space to demonstrate their products. However, it is an opportunity for hands-on exposure to cutting edge technologies, as well as to learn about other core AANS-associated entities such as the Journal of Neurosurgery, the Neurosurgery Research & Education Foundation, or Neurosurgery PAC. All meeting registrants are entitled to a boxed lunch every day, which can be picked up in the Exhibit Hall.
- The E2M Committee sponsors one event that is explicitly designed for students, "How to Apply for Residency: Do's and Don'ts" which is a high-yield half-day special clinic on Friday, May 1st;

please note this is a ticketed event with limited seating, so if you are interested, early registration is recommended.

- Don't miss The Young Minds Global Forum: An Interactive Exchange on Friday, May 1 (3–4:15 PM, Stars at Night Ballroom 2–3, HBGCC), hosted by the E2M Committee, CSNS, and the AANS Global Committee. This dynamic session brings together early-career neurosurgeons and trainees from around the world for connection, mentorship, and cross-cultural idea-sharing, featuring selected global abstracts and poster presentations. Admission is complimentary for residents, fellows, and medical students.
- Several other E2M-sponsored events are scattered throughout the schedule, including a networking luncheon for trainees to engage directly with senior level AANS leaders (ticketed), and the Early-to-mid Career Neurosurgeon Research Forum, featuring the highest-scored abstracts submitted by trainees and a keynote Osler Lecture; these are specially curated for trainees, and you are encouraged to attend as many as possible.
- Some departments offer “Alumni Receptions” during the evenings; if your home institution is hosting such an event, students are frequently invited for networking purposes, but confirm this with your resident or faculty mentors.
- The “Can't Miss Monday” sessions feature M&M case presentations, expert panel discussions, and case-based learning, excellent opportunities for trainees.
- We've included a roster of E2M Committee members in this guide; please feel welcome and encouraged to say hi and introduce yourselves at the meeting, or to reach out afterwards regarding opportunities for future engagement with AANS.
- As always, show up early, stay late, and have a great time learning about the wonderful world of neurosurgery!



History of the AANS

The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) traces its roots to the Harvey Cushing Society, which was formed in 1931. The Harvey Cushing Society, named after Dr. Harvey Cushing, was formed to advance the practice of neurosurgery, foster collaboration among neurosurgeons, and promote scientific and professional progress within the field. The society aimed to address the growing need for a formal organization to unify neurosurgeons and support the development of the specialty. Importantly, the Cushing Society also aimed to serve as a more inclusive organization, as organized societies in neurosurgery had previously limited their membership, and did not represent the broader and growing neurosurgical community.

Until the 1960s, the Harvey Cushing Society operated in parallel with several other national neurosurgical societies to advance and promote organized neurosurgery. In 1967, Dr. Charles B. Mayfield, then president of the Cushing Society, recognized the need for a unified and leading voice to represent the profession nationally. He advocated for the inclusion of representatives from other neurosurgical societies. This resulted in the restructuring of the organization as the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), with an associated increase in emphasis on the needs of a rapidly expanding and diversifying specialty.

Today, the AANS retains a central role throughout the field of neurosurgery as the largest and most diverse professional society serving our specialty in the United States. The AANS aims to provide leadership, advocacy, and support for neurosurgeons across the country and beyond, with a scope that encompasses trainees, academicians, community practitioners, and ancillary staff such as advanced practice providers. Its mission continues to focus on advancing neurosurgery, improving patient care, and representing the interests of neurosurgeons across all stages of training, as well as the needs and interests of the neurosurgical community at large.

The AANS was formed with the goal of increasing inclusion within the neurosurgical community, in response to the prior societies' restrictive membership policies. This ethos of broadening access and representation continues today throughout the AANS, and in particular through our Early-to-mid Career Committee, which has as its core mission to serve the most diverse subset of the neurosurgical community, students, residents, fellows, and faculty in the early stages of their careers.

AI in Neurosurgical Education & Research

Artificial intelligence is reshaping how neurosurgeons practice, teach, and advance the field. From machine learning-driven imaging analysis and predictive modeling to large language models that accelerate literature review and clinical decision support, AI tools are becoming woven into every dimension of the specialty. The neurosurgeons who learn to work alongside these technologies, thoughtfully and skillfully, will define the next era of patient care.

In research, AI is already transforming the pace and scale of discovery. Natural language processing can synthesize thousands of articles in minutes, deep learning models are identifying radiographic patterns invisible to the human eye, and generative tools are helping investigators draft, iterate, and refine manuscripts more efficiently than ever before. For trainees, developing fluency with these platforms is no longer optional, it is a core competency that will shape scholarly productivity and the ability to contribute meaningfully to the field.

In education, the potential is equally profound. AI-powered simulation, personalized learning pathways, and intelligent tutoring systems are beginning to supplement traditional training models. Students and residents who engage with these tools early will not only learn more efficiently but will also be better prepared to evaluate and implement new technologies throughout their careers.

Judicious use, however, is paramount. AI models can hallucinate, amplify biases present in training data, and generate outputs that sound authoritative but lack clinical accuracy. Every AI-generated insight must be critically appraised with the same rigor applied to any other source of evidence. The goal is not to replace surgical judgment but to augment it, and maintaining that distinction requires discipline, skepticism, and continuous education.

The E2M Committee encourages every student and trainee at #AANS2026 to invest in building these skills now. Attend the sessions marked with the [AI in Neurosurgery](#) tag in the schedule that follows, ask hard questions, and think critically about how these tools can serve patients and practice. The future of neurosurgery belongs to those who learn AI well, and use it wisely.

Legend:

E2M

MUST-SEE

AI in Neurosurgery

Can't Miss Monday

Free Friday

TICKETED

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026

7:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Regis W. Haid Jr. Symposium: Tier 1 Operators in Spine, Business and Special Forces

Room 220, Level 2, HBGCC

TICKETED (Free for students/residents)

8:00 – 11:30 AM

How to Apply to Residency: The Do's and Don'ts

Rm. 301BC, Level 3, HBGCC

E2M

TICKETED (\$130 for students)

10:00 – 11:30 AM

Ethical and Accurate Coding: A Case-Based Guide for Neurosurgeons

Rm. 302BC, Level 3, HBGCC

Free Friday

11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Early to Mid-Career Research Forum Featuring the Osler Lectures

Rm. 302A, Level 3, HBGCC

E2M

1:00 – 2:30 PM

Neurotrauma for the General Neurosurgeon: A Case-Based Clinic

Rm. 302BC, Level 3, HBGCC

Free Friday

3:00 – 4:15 PM

The Young Minds Global Forum: An Interactive Exchange

Stars at Night Ballroom 2-3, Level 3, HBGCC

E2M

TICKETED (Free for students/residents)

4:30 – 6:00 PM

Opening Session

Exhibit Hall 1, Street Level, HBGCC

MUST-SEE

6:00 – 7:00 PM

Sip, Savor and Showcase (Opening Reception)

Exhibit Hall 2, Street Level, HBGCC

Networking

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2026

7:00 – 8:15 AM

AANS/CNS Section on Women in Neurosurgery (WINS) Breakfast

Salon CD, 3rd Floor, San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter

TICKETED (\$65 for students)

8:30 – 9:30 AM

Plenary I (Non-CME)

Enter through AANS Exhibit Hall, HBGCC

MUST-SEE

10:15 AM – 12:15 PM

Plenary II

Enter through AANS Exhibit Hall, HBGCC

MUST-SEE

2:00 – 3:30 PM

Matson Lecture and Top Rated Pediatric Abstracts

Rm. 302A, Level 3, HBGCC

2:00 – 3:30 PM

Microsurgery: Crafting the Future

Rm. 303BC, Level 3, HBGCC

2:00 – 3:30 PM

Annual Horsley Lecture and Roundtable Discussion

Rm. 301A, Level 3, HBGCC

2:00 – 3:30 PM

Complication Avoidance, Recognition and Management of Complex Tumor Cases

Stars at Night Ballroom 1, Level 3, HBGCC

4 – 5:30 PM

Leveraging AI and Emerging Technologies to Optimize Patient Outcomes in Spinal Surgery

Rm. 301BC, Level 3, HBGCC

AI in Neurosurgery

4:00 – 5:30 PM

The Hybrid Neurosurgeon: Symbiosis of Microsurgery and Endovascular

Rm. 303BC, Level 3, HBGCC

4:00 – 5:30 PM

The Next Frontier of Surgical Neuro-Oncology: Biologics and Beyond

Stars at Night Ballroom 1, Level 3, HBGCC

4:00 – 5:30 PM

AANS/ASBN: The Translational Future of AI in Neurosurgery

Rm. 301A, Level 3, HBGCC

AI in Neurosurgery

7:30 – 8:30 PM

AANS/CNS Section on Women in Neurosurgery (WINS) Reception

Pearl 1-2, 2nd Floor, San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2026

8:30 – 9:30 AM

Plenary III (Non-CME)

Enter through AANS Exhibit Hall, HBGCC

MUST-SEE

10:15 AM – 12:15 PM

Plenary IV

Enter through AANS Exhibit Hall, HBGCC

MUST-SEE

12:30 – 1:45 PM

Early to Mid-Career Neurosurgeons Networking Luncheon

Rm. 220, Level 2, HBGCC

E2M

TICKETED (\$35)

2:00 – 3:30 PM

CV Controversies

Rm. 303BC, Level 3, HBGCC

2:00 – 3:30 PM

David G. Kline Lecture: Peripheral Nerve Injury and Abstracts

Rm. 303A, Level 3, HBGCC

2:00 – 3:30 PM

Neurosurgical Role in Multiply Recurrent Tumors

Stars at Night Ballroom 1, Level 3, HBGCC

2:00 – 3:30 PM

Evolving Frontiers in Neurotrauma: Lessons, Leadership and Adaptation

Rm. 302BC, Level 3, HBGCC

4:00 – 5:30 PM

A Synergistic Approach to Innovation in Neurosurgery

Stars at Night Ballroom 1, Level 3, HBGCC

AI in Neurosurgery

4:00 – 5:30 PM

Education Rapid Fire Abstracts

Stars at Night Ballroom 2-3, Stage 2, Level 3, HBGCC

4:00 – 5:30 PM

Top Scoring Scientific Abstracts

Rm. 304AB, Level 3, HBGCC

4:00 – 5:30 PM

Advances in Epilepsy Surgery

Rm. 301A, Level 3, HBGCC

4:00 – 5:30 PM

Next Frontiers in Cerebrovascular Neurosurgery

Rm. 303BC, Level 3, HBGCC

4:00 – 5:30 PM

Innovation, Collaboration, Transformation in Peripheral Nerve Surgery

Rm. 303A, Level 3, HBGCC

6:15 – 9:15 PM

Rengachary Lecture at the Peter Carmel History Section Dinner

Casa Rio, 430 E. Commerce St., San Antonio

TICKETED (\$50 for students)

MONDAY, MAY 4, 2026

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Spine M&M: Case Presentations, Thoughtful Reflections and Strategies for Avoidance

Rm. 301BC, Level 3, HBGCC

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Cranial M&M: Case Presentations, Thoughtful Reflections and Strategies for Avoidance

Rm. 303BC, Level 3, HBGCC

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Debates in Neurotrauma

Rm. 304AB, Level 3, HBGCC

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Strategic Career Development in Neurosurgery: From Fellowship to Faculty

Rm. 302BC, Level 3, HBGCC

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Refining Brain Tumor Surgery Through Intra-Operative Molecular Testing

Stars at Night Ballroom 1, Level 3, HBGCC

9:45 – 11:15 AM

Difficult Spine Cases: Surgical Nuances and Complication Avoidance

Rm. 301BC, Level 3, HBGCC

9:45 – 11:15 AM

Difficult Cranial Cases: Surgical Nuances and Complication Avoidance

Stars at Night Ballroom 1, Level 3, HBGCC

9:45 – 11:15 AM

Computational Neurosurgery

Rm. 302BC, Level 3, HBGCC

9:45 – 11:15 AM

Ask the Experts: Case Based Discussions in Neurotrauma

Rm. 304AB, Level 3, HBGCC

E2M Committee 26–27 Roster

Early to Mid-Career Neurosurgeons Committee

Christopher Salvatore Graffeo, MD, MS

University of Oklahoma

Chair

Anthony M. Asher, MD

Barrow Neurological Institute

Resident Member

Nishit Mummareddy, MD

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Resident Member

Juliana C. Capp, MD

Mayo Clinic

Resident Member

Yasmine Alkhalid, MD

University of Chicago

Resident Member

Vardhaan Ambati, MS

UCSF School of Medicine

Medical Student Member

Kishore Balasubramanian, MS

Texas A&M; College of Medicine

Medical Student Member

Nicholas Sader, MD, MSc, FRCSC, FAANS

University of Oklahoma

Research & AI Lead

Anna L. Huguenard, MD

Washington University in St. Louis

NREF Representative

Education & Mentorship Lead

Michael Feldman, MD

University of Oklahoma

Shervin Rahimpour, MD, FAANS, FCNS

University of Utah Health

Visish Srinivasan, MD

University of Pennsylvania

Communications Lead

Christina Wright, MD, MPH

Oregon Health & Science University

JNSPG Representative

Laila Malani Mohammad, MD, FAANS

Medical City Dallas Hospital

Lee S. Hwang, MD, FAANS

Barrow Brain and Spine

Sarah I. Woodrow, MD, FAANS

Cleveland Clinic Akron General

Aviva Abosch, MD

Baptist Health

Kristen Erickson

American Association of Neurological Surgeons

Staff Liaison

Kristi King

American Association of Neurological Surgeons

Staff Liaison

E2M Working Groups

Students, residents, and early-career faculty are encouraged to volunteer for any of the following working groups:

- **Communications:** Outreach, social media, and content to engage the neurosurgical community.
- **Research & AI:** Scholarly collaboration and AI integration in neurosurgical research and practice.
- **Education & Mentorship:** Educational programming and mentorship between trainees and established neurosurgeons.
- **Independent Practice:** Resources for neurosurgeons transitioning to community and independent practice.

To join a working group or learn more, contact Dr. Christopher S. Graffeo at graffeo@gmail.com.

Appendix: Selected Resources

for Student Attendees at #AANS2026

Medical Student Membership – AANS

AANS Medical Student Chapters – AANS

Medical Students – AANS

YouTube – AANS

AANS (@AANSNeuro) / X

2026 AANS Meeting Registration

Venue & Meeting App

Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center (HGBCC)

200 E. Market St., San Antonio, TX 78205

AANS Meeting App

View scientific sessions, look up speakers, build your schedule and more.

Access the meeting app at aans.org/App.

See you in San Antonio!

#AANS2026

Registration Fees Quick Reference

Category	Early Bird / Advance	Late
Medical Student Member	\$149	\$199
Non-Member Medical Student	\$199	\$249
Resident/Fellow Member	\$399	\$599

Ticketed Events (Student Pricing)

Event	Student Fee
How to Apply to Residency (PC101)	\$130
Spine Endoscopy – Didactic (PC102)	\$130
VR/AI Cranial Practice (PC103)	\$130
Brain Mapping Course (PC104)	\$200
VR/AI Spinal Practice (PC106)	\$130
AI Applications for Practice (PC107)	\$130
Spine Endoscopy + Hands-On (PC108)	\$225
WINS Breakfast	\$65
E2M Networking Luncheon	\$35
History Section Dinner	\$50

AANS 2026 ANNUAL MEETING

05/01/26 - 05/03/26

HENRY B GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - STREET LEVEL
 SAN ANTONIO, TX

