Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you about the passing of Dr. Wayne Katon. Wayne was a truly great human being, a Mensch, a dear friend, a generous mentor, and a wonderful colleague to so many of us. He was also one of the most accomplished physician scientists I have ever known.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, Wayne came to the Pacific Northwest for medical school and joined our department as a resident in 1976. After completing his psychiatry residency at UW, he joined our faculty in 1979, eventually establishing the department’s Division of Health Services and Psychiatric Epidemiology. In this role, he spent 35 years making superb contributions as a clinician, teacher, and researcher. Several generations of medical students, residents, and junior faculty benefited from Wayne’s superb teaching and mentorship. His research brought tremendous honor and recognition to the UW and it revolutionized care for patients around the world.

Wayne was what we call in the business a true “triple threat”, a superb clinician, teacher, and researcher. Initially trained as a psychiatrist, he largely self-taught and mastered the fields of psychiatric epidemiology and health services research at a time when training opportunities in this area were few and far between. Drawing on his clinical experiences at the interface of psychiatry and medicine, Wayne developed an outstanding research program on the effects of depression on emotional and physical health. A passionate and gifted scientist, he worked closely with researchers from several disciplines at UW Medicine and Group Health Cooperative. This work culminated in the development, testing, and dissemination of a program called ‘Collaborative Care,’ an approach in which mental health specialists help primary care providers provide effective mental health care. Wayne led the team that conducted the first large randomized controlled trial of Collaborative Care. Since its original publication in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) in 1995, more than 80 additional randomized controlled trials in the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Australia, and more recently in low- and middle-income countries have validated the effectiveness of this approach. Today, the Collaborative Care model pioneered by Wayne and his research team puts effective depression care in reach for millions of people living with depression around the world.

Wayne published his research in more than 500 scholarly articles, many in leading medical journals such as the *New England Journal of Medicine* and *JAMA*. His H-Index, a measure of both the number and impact of a researcher’s academic publications exceeds 100, an impact score that is almost unheard of, and one that surpasses that of many Nobel Prize winners. He wrote several books, edited one of the leading journals at the interface of medicine and psychiatry, *General Hospital Psychiatry*, and he served on the editorial boards of several other major medical journals. Wayne was a gifted, passionate and highly efficient writer and editor, and if he had an opportunity to edit these words, he would teach me how to “say more with less.”

Wayne had continuous support for his research from the National Institute of Mental Health and from major foundations, bringing more than $25 million in research grants to the
University of Washington. He taught and supervised junior faculty across several departments including psychiatry, pediatrics, family medicine, and obstetrics / gynecology. Many of his mentees have gone on to leadership positions at UW and in other major academic centers around the world.

Wayne also maintained a clinical practice of psychiatry for 35 years. A gifted, creative, and highly intuitive clinician, he provided compassionate care and advice to patients and colleagues. Wayne was regarded as one of the most experienced and skilled psychiatrists in Seattle, and he received referrals from colleagues across the country. In recent years, he was repeatedly honored as one of Seattle’s top psychiatrists in publications such as Seattle Metropolitan Magazine and Seattle Magazine. Three decades of students and residents learned from Wayne in the psychiatry and family medicine residency programs at UW and at Providence and on the consult service at UW Medical Center. Hundreds of practicing psychiatrists, psychologists, family physicians, and other specialists looked to him for advice when confronted with challenging clinical situations.

Wayne received numerous awards recognizing his international status as a leading clinician, teacher and researcher. In 2013, he was elected as president of the Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine (APM), the leading academic organization of psychiatrists who specialize in treating patients with medical and mental health problems. He also received the APM’s Eleanor and Thomas P. Hackett Memorial Award, the organization’s most prestigious award that is given for lifetime achievement in the care of patients with medical and psychiatric illnesses. This year, the American Psychiatric Association will award Wayne the 2015 Distinguished Service Award for a lifetime of outstanding contributions to the field of Psychiatry.

Despite his tremendous academic accomplishments, Wayne remained wonderfully humble, straight-forward, down-to-earth, and approachable. He set a beautiful example to his mentees about balancing his work and the rest of his life. He delighted in the successes of his two daughters, Jodi and Rachel. He loved the Pacific Northwest and he enjoyed hiking, cross country skiing, and backpacking deep in the Cascade Mountains with his wife Bobbi. He was a competitive tennis player and there were few evenings, especially during the long Seattle summers where he could be found at work after 5 PM.

This brief summary cannot do justice to Wayne’s contributions as a friend and colleague. For more than 35 years, Wayne worked graciously and tirelessly to improve the lives of those living with mental and physical health problems through his research, training, and clinical care. Along the way, he touched and inspired thousands of students, residents, and faculty colleagues at UW and around the world. He introduced new approaches that have revolutionized mental health care in the US and beyond. All the while, even in the face of his own struggle with serious illness, he remained one of the most humble, approachable, caring and wonderful people we have ever known.

We have lost a great friend and colleague. We will all miss Wayne terribly, but his spirit and his legacy will live on in our hearts, in our passion, and in our efforts to improve care at the interface of medicine and psychiatry. We will plan a wonderful event to celebrate Wayne’s life sometime in the next few months and we will be in touch about this as we settle on a date. Meanwhile, let us comfort each other and live up to Wayne’s example of making the world a
better place. If you would like to make a contribution to honor Wayne, please consider contributing to a new fund we have established in Wayne’s name* to support the training of the next generation of physician scientists in our department. This was Wayne’s passion and we hope to honor him by establishing this fund.

*The Wayne Katon Memorial Fund,

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"None of us is as smart as all of us."

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