Dear Colleagues,

In our Report to the Community last year, I described how UW Medicine is creating the future of healthcare in patient care, medical education and research. I am pleased to say that this work is progressing rapidly and UW Medicine faculty, staff, students and trainees are leading positive changes in all areas of healthcare.

Patient Care: We are delivering better care and spending healthcare dollars more wisely, and we are more engaged with empowered patients at the center of their care. After several years of foundational work, we launched the UW Medicine Accountable Care Network in 2015. Our contract with The Boeing Company lowers the cost of care to the company and its employees while raising the bar on quality, service and access. The Washington State Health Care Authority is offering a similar new accountable care program in 2016. The UW Medicine Accountable Care Network is the only healthcare organization participating in both of these landmark programs.

Medical Education: In fall 2015, the UW School of Medicine implemented the most fundamental change to the medical student curriculum in the history of our school. Based on studies showing that active learning expands student knowledge and retention, the new curriculum gives students hands-on training from the beginning of their medical school experience and focuses on the lifelong learning skills physicians need to keep up-to-date throughout their careers.

Research: UW Medicine is the top public medical school in the nation for grant funding from the National Institutes of Health and number two among all medical schools according to U.S. News & World Report. Our faculty compete successfully for more than $1 billion of research funding each year. UW Medicine research also benefits from private philanthropy, as shown in this report by large gifts for stem cell therapy to repair hearts, palliative care, Alzheimer’s disease research and sports safety. From the mechanisms of disease to new clinical applications, UW Medicine researchers offer hope for better health outcomes to people around the world.

I am deeply grateful to UW Medicine’s 25,000 faculty, staff, students and trainees for your contributions to our community and for your work to improve health each and every day.

Sincerely,

Paul G. Ramsey, M.D.
CEO, UW Medicine
Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs and
Dean of the School of Medicine, University of Washington

UW Medicine Patients Are First

UW Medicine makes a difference in the lives of patients and their families on a daily basis. Our culture of service excellence is based on placing the needs of patients first. UW Medicine focuses on what patients consider to be key characteristics of excellent care: respectful, compassionate, timely, personalized and coordinated. Our patients are at the center of everything we do.

UW Medicine Patients Are First Pillars are the foundation for setting our organizational goals and direction.

Eight healthcare entities, one mission

UW Medicine is the most comprehensive healthcare system serving residents of Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho (WWAMI region) and beyond. Our mission is to improve the health of the public by advancing medical knowledge, providing outstanding primary and specialty care to the people of the region, and preparing tomorrow’s physicians, scientists and other health professionals.

Harborview Medical Center is owned by King County, governed by a county-appointed Board of Trustees, and managed by UW Medicine. It is the region’s only Level I adult and pediatric trauma and burn center. Harborview also provides specialized services for vascular, orthopedics, neurosciences, ophthalmology, behavioral health, rehabilitation services, HIV/AIDS care, emergency medicine, disaster management and complex critical care.

Northwest Hospital & Medical Center is an acute care community hospital and clinic network located in North Seattle. It offers primary and specialized care, including comprehensive cardiac care, cancer care, labor and delivery, neurosciences, orthopedics and community wellness programs.

Valley Medical Center is an acute care hospital and clinic network. The oldest and largest public district community hospital system in Washington, Valley Medical Center serves more than 600,000 residents in southeast King County. Valley offers specialized services in cancer treatment and support, diabetes education, gastroenterology, heart and vascular services, joint replacement and orthopedics, neuroscience, ophthalmology, sleep medicine, and obstetrics, midwifery and maternal fetal medicine.

UW Medical Center is a world-renowned academic medical center that provides highly specialized services for cardiac care, cancer care and stem cell transplantation, obstetrics (including high-risk neonatal intensive care), digestive diseases, sports medicine and solid organ transplantation.

UW Neighborhood Clinics is a network of primary care clinics located throughout the Puget Sound region. The clinics provide a wide spectrum of services, from pediatrics to geriatrics, using the medical home model. The network has been nationally recognized for high-quality healthcare by the Accreditation Association of Ambulatory Health Care.

UW Physicians is the practice group for approximately 1,900 physicians and healthcare professionals who care for patients in the UW Medicine system and the WWAMI region.

UW School of Medicine has been ranked as one of the top three medical schools in the world, with 30 clinical and basic science departments. In researchers and faculty make life-improving discoveries while training medical students, residents, fellows and allied health professionals to care for future generations of patients.

Quick action by Airlift Northwest and UW Medical Center brings miracle baby into the world

When Sandra Gonzalez looks at her daughter Zoe, she says a prayer of thanks for a baby who is healthy despite arriving in the world much too early.

After six previous miscarriages, all between 18 and 23 weeks, the 31-year-old mother thought this time she had made it past a key milestone and this baby would go full term. But that wasn’t to be. At just 26 weeks, Gonzalez’s water broke, and she was rushed to Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital.

The on-duty obstetrician knew she needed an immediate transfer to UW Medical Center (UWMC), which specializes in high-risk births. Fortunately, Airlift Northwest had just started 24/7 coverage out of Yakima, so within 30 minutes, Gonzalez was in Seattle. “I don’t like planes, or flying,” Gonzalez said. But her daughter’s life was at stake, so fly she did. Zoe was born at UWMC and then spent the next four months in the hospital’s Level IV neonatal intensive care unit.

Today, Zoe and her mother are both thriving. Zoe is participating in a UWMC research study that monitors preemies for the first seven years, while providing them with medical checkups.

“I really appreciate all the staff did for Zoe and me. We just received amazing care,” Gonzalez said.

Overcoming fear of surgery with patient-centered care

Lauren Fortune, 66, twisted her knee at work in 2011. The result was a meniscus tear that led to knee surgeries. Her first surgery, a total knee replacement for her left knee, went fine, but the anesthesia and pain medications made her very ill, resulting in a difficult recovery.

In 2014, Fortune needed to have another knee replacement for her right knee, but she was afraid of repeating her past experience. She turned to Dr. Navin Fernando at UW Medicine Hip & Knee Center at Northwest Hospital for assistance. Fernando knew that to help Lauren overcome her fear, she had to be an active participant in making decisions about her care. Patient-centered care means being respectful of and responsive to patient needs and ensures that patient values guide clinical decisions.

Fernando set up a special consult with the hospital’s Surgical Pain Relief Service. Together, they worked to come up with a new drug protocol so Fortune could have the surgery and heal without the medications that made her sick.

“The whole process went so well and I credit Dr. Fernando for my pain-free life today,” said Fortune. “It was a very positive experience.”

Innovative surgery revitalizes fly fishing guide’s life

Randy Rice battled neck pain for 20 years after being injured during a building project. His pain would come and go in episodes lasting up to six months. Rice worked hard to manage his pain conservatively and without surgery.

When his activities, including working as a fly fishing guide, became severely limited, he finally turned to Valley Medical Center’s Spine Center for advanced, two-level disc replacement surgery. Replacing two discs is a newer surgical option for patients who previously could have only considered traditional disc fusion for cervical disc degeneration. Disc replacement offers better mobility than fusion, and fewer patients require secondary surgery.

In the hospital for just a day, Rice began walking right after surgery and used physical therapy exercises, swimming and lifting weights to regain his lost strength. In six months after his double cervical disc replacement, he was back to guiding whitewater fly fishing trips.

“I can’t begin to tell you the difference this has made in my life,” said Rice. “Valley Medical Center gave me my life back.”
Moments after the September 24 crash involving a “Ride the Ducks” tour vehicle and a charter bus on the Aurora Bridge in Seattle, UW Medicine physicians and staff at Harborview Medical Center began mobilizing its command center for medical response.

“The Seattle Fire Department told us there was a mass casualty, a collision of some sort,” said Anne Newcombe, clinical director of emergency services at the hospital. “We were to expect a large number of patients.”

Before patients were even loaded into ambulances, firefighters and paramedics were in communication with Harborview about how many to expect. Right away, communication began with other hospitals to get a snapshot of their capacity and the number of injured patients who could be transferred.

UW Medicine hospitals ended up caring for 39 of the 51 people injured. Harborview cared for 17 seriously injured victims; Northwest Hospital & Medical Center cared for 17 and UW Medical Center cared for five patients.

Harborview serves as the Disaster Medical Control Center for Seattle and King County. This role takes place within the emergency department in a room stocked with communication equipment: radios, a satellite phone, cell phones, fax, a landline and an online healthcare incident management system (WATrac).

The Center’s mission is to minimize the impact of emergencies and disasters to the community through communication, patient distribution and response coordination between first responders, hospitals and other healthcare partners.

During any crisis, Harborview’s focus remains on mobilizing quickly, saving lives and keeping everyone informed.

“We prepare and plan for an emergency but the patient and the family doesn’t. Their lives have been turned upside down,” said Newcombe.
Repairing hearts: Researchers make major advances in stem cell therapy for heart disease

Researchers at the Institute for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine (ISCRM) have made significant advances toward using stem cells to repair damaged hearts. If successful, the treatment will offer new hope to patients with heart failure, a condition that contributes to 1 in 10 deaths in the United States. The technique involves growing human heart muscle cells derived from stem cells and injecting them into hearts that have been damaged by a heart attack.

In a study of non-human primates published last year in the journal Nature, Dr. Charles Murry, UW professor of pathology and interim director of ISCRM, and his colleagues demonstrated that stem-cell-derived muscle cells – when injected into the heart – will integrate and begin to beat in synchrony with the healthy heart cells. Preliminary findings from a follow-on study indicate that these cells also increase the strength of the heart’s contractions and improve its function.

The Heart Regeneration Program received significant support when it was awarded a generous gift from Lynne and Mike Garvey and a $10 million investment from the Washington Research Foundation in 2015.

“These funds will make it possible for us to complete our current animal trials and, if these are successful, conduct the first clinical trials in human patients with heart failure,” Murry said.

Holding back the tide of aging

People someday may enjoy many more years of life in good health thanks to research being conducted at UW Medicine. Inside yeast, roundworms, fruit flies and mice are clues to delaying bodily decline and staving off diseases of old age. Dr. Matt Kaeberlein, UW assistant professor of pathology, and Dr. Peter Rubinstein, UW professor of pathology, study dietary interventions and medications that might stall cell aging.

Although treatment for people will take longer to implement, Kaeberlein and colleague Dr. Daniel Promislow, UW professor of pathology, have started the Dog Aging Project to improve healthy longevity of pets. These efforts continue UW Medicine’s longstanding leadership in the study of the basic biology of aging.

Epic impact – data and disease

With its Global Burden of Disease Study, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) created a revolution in improving health standards worldwide. In April 2015, the book “Epic Measures: One Doctor, Seven Billion Patients,” was released, offering an intimate look at the lifelong pursuit of Dr. Christopher Murray, IHME Director and UW professor of global health, to quantify how we live and die.

Murray’s ambitious quest was backed by a $100 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and policymakers from Mexico to Rwanda to China have used the data to improve the health of their communities. IHME is now known worldwide as a health metrics innovator.
New curriculum prepares physicians of the future

The students who entered the UW School of Medicine (UWSOM) in fall 2015 experienced the first major change to the curriculum in 15 years. Envisioning and building the new curriculum began in 2010 and involved almost 500 faculty, staff, students, alumni and others across Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho (WWAMI).

“The process was successful because we leveraged the strengths of all of our WWAMI sites. It was a true collaboration,” said Dr. Michael Ryan, associate dean for curriculum, who led the effort from its start five years ago.

Studies show that active learning expands student knowledge and retention in a different way than lectures and in-classroom instruction. The new curriculum, prompted by UWSOM’s commitment to provide exceptional training for tomorrow’s leading physicians, gives students hands-on training from the beginning of their medical school experience.

The 2015 WWAMI Curriculum features active learning, shorter class hours and increased emphasis on the lifelong learning skills physicians need to keep up-to-date throughout their careers. Basic science training is shortened to 18 months and paired with a robust clinical training program. From the start of medical school, each week students receive a day of alternating clinical training and primary care experiences in physicians’ offices.

The Foundation phase of the curriculum builds the knowledge and skills students need to become physicians. Prior to this phase, students attend a multi-week Orientation and Immersion, which prepares them to navigate medical school and trains them in basic clinical skills. Brief presentations and exercises orient students to topics they will cover in their studies, including performing basic life support, conducting a physical exam.

Continuous improvement is also an important part of the new curriculum. “Every week we ask students what went well and what didn’t so we can learn from them,” said Ryan. So far, students have provided positive feedback about the orientation to medical school, clinical training, bonding with classmates and teachers, and developing comfort and passion for working with patients.

Critical funding supports WWAMI Spokane expansion

UW School of Medicine has been educating medical students in eastern Washington for more than 40 years. In 2015, the Washington State Legislature funded the School’s program in Spokane with $9 million for the 2015-2017 biennium – $3.6 million allocated for the first year of the budget and $5.4 million for the second. This amount not only provides continued funding for the program, but also the ability to expand and accommodate more students.

Expansion is reaching the faculty ranks as well. UWSOM welcomed eight new physician faculty members, recruited from in and around Spokane, to its medical teaching team. These physicians join the 12 returning UWSOM faculty who teach first- and second-year medical students in Spokane.

Celebrating students’ entry into medicine

Two highly anticipated ceremonies occur during the new Orientation and Immersion phase of the 2015 WWAMI Curriculum: On the first day, students are formally presented with the stethoscopes to use throughout medical school and beyond. These are gifts from the UW Medicine Alumni Association. On the last day, students receive and don their white coats that signify their entry into medical school and the profession.

Alaska Track expands horizons for pediatric residents

The Alaska Track of the UW Medicine-Seattle Children’s pediatric residency gives its trainees firsthand experience practicing in the Last Frontier. From urban clinics to bush villages, the young doctors become part of local medical care. Each summer, four new residents enter the Alaska Track. By staggering when first-, second- and third-year participants arrive, the Alaska clinical sites have residents year-round. The residents are eager to foster good health among the state’s children: A high school clinic and a state’s children: A high school clinic and a

UW School of Medicine sets record for residents entering primary care

In 2015, a record-breaking 60 percent of the UW School of Medicine graduating class entered primary care residencies through the National Residency Matching Program. A total of 130 graduates are going into the primary-care fields of family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics. More than one-third of the medical students who started in Spokane matched in a Spokane residency program, while 37 percent matched into residency programs in the WWAMI region.
The most comprehensive healthcare network in the region

A new era in healthcare
The UW Medicine Accountable Care Network brings together many of the leading healthcare organizations in the Puget Sound region in a collective effort to change how healthcare is delivered.

In 2015, this new healthcare model was launched in partnership with The Boeing Company. With clinics and hospitals from Bellingham to Olympia, the Network provides the company’s employees with excellent service and access close to where they live and work.

Better care at lower cost
Accountable care focuses on three goals, which are also called the Triple Aim: improve the patient experience of care, achieve better health outcomes and reduce costs. It springs from the awareness that the traditional American health system – where providers are paid based on the number of services performed – has resulted in higher costs and poorer outcomes compared to many other countries.

With its successful rollout for Boeing, the UW Medicine Accountable Care Network demonstrates that it is possible to provide better care at lower cost. In addition to being the right way to practice medicine, the Network allows healthcare providers to collaborate with employers and insurance companies on mutual efforts to improve the health of their communities.

Patients have access to the most comprehensive health system in the region with services ranging from primary and preventive care to advanced specialty care. The Network also uses a medical home model where primary care providers focus on wellness and provide access to highly experienced specialists when needed.

The result is more affordable healthcare that meets each patient’s unique needs – starting with a trusted relationship with a skilled primary care provider. For more complex healthcare issues, patients have access to a full team of specialists who are leaders in their fields.

Financial incentives are based on the quality of patient care, rather than the number of services provided. When patients are healthier – with better treatment for illnesses including chronic conditions – the cost of care is lower and savings can be shared with employers and employees through reduced insurance premiums and deductibles.

The UW Medicine Accountable Care Network will be offered by other healthcare payers in 2016. The Washington State Health Care Authority selected the Network as a new health plan option for 163,000 state employees living in King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston counties.

UW Medicine Accountable Care Network Member Organizations

- Capital Medical Center
- Cascade Valley Hospital and Clinics
- Island Hospital & Clinics
- MultiCare Connected Care
- Overlake Hospital Medical Center
- Overlake Medical Clinics
- PeaceHealth
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance
- Seattle Children’s Hospital
- Skagit Regional Health
- UW Medicine

UW Medicine Virtual Clinic expands telemedicine program

The UW Medicine Virtual Clinic successfully launched in January 2015. This high-tech clinic allows anyone located in Washington to receive expert healthcare any time of the day or night at home, the office or anywhere convenient care is needed.

During a virtual clinic visit, a board-certified family practice doctor or nurse practitioner provides assessment and treatment over the phone or through a webcam on the patient’s smartphone, tablet or computer. Visits typically last about 20 minutes. The virtual clinic provider can recommend home care options, suggest over-the-counter treatments, arrange a prescription and help locate a convenient pharmacy. If a patient does not have a primary care provider, the virtual clinic team will help find one.

With the launch of the virtual clinic, UW Medicine is meeting consumer demand for high-tech, affordable and convenient ways to receive immediate care. In 2016, virtual clinic visits will be offered at no cost to patients enrolled in the UMP Plus – UW Medicine Accountable Care Network plan.
Hospital recognitions for quality and safety

Harborview Medical Center
- American Association of Critical Care Nurses: Beacon Gold Award for Medical Cardiac Intensive Care Unit
- America’s Essential Hospitals: Gage Award Remarkable Project for Integrating Medical and Mental Healthcare for Homeless Populations
- U.S. News & World Report Best Hospitals: Ranked No. 6 in the Seattle Metro area and No. 11 in Washington

Northwest Hospital & Medical Center
- American Heart/American Stroke Association: “Get With The Guidelines” Silver Plus Award
- American Heart Association: “Cardiac Care” Silver Plus Award
- U.S. News & World Report – Best Hospitals for Patients Who Need Common Care: High Performing in Heart Failure

UW Medical Center
- American College of Surgeons: High Performing in Heart Bypass Surgery and High Performing in Knee Replacement
- U.S. News & World Report – Best Hospitals for Patients Who Need Common Care: High Performing in Hip Replacement and High Performing in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), High Performing in Chronic Kidney Disease

Valley Medical Center
- National Committee for Quality Assurance: Patient-Centered Medical Home Recognition for Valley Medical Center Clinics
- U.S. News & World Report – Best Hospitals for Patients Who Need Common Care: High Performing in Hip Replacement and High Performing in Knee Replacement
- U.S. News & World Report Best Hospitals: Ranked No. 4 in the Seattle Metro area and No. 6 in Washington

UW Medicine strategic growth and initiatives

In fiscal year 2015, UW Medicine opened clinics and developed strategic relationships with other healthcare organizations to expand care opportunities for patients throughout Washington.

- UW Medicine opened a multispecialty location in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood. The facility houses the UW Neighborhood Ballard Clinic, Northwest Hospital’s The Sports Medicine Clinic and its physical-therapy division, Advanced Manual Therapy, as well as other rotating specialty care services, all in one location.
- The UW Medicine Maternal Fetal Medicine Clinic opened a location in Arlington, Washington. UW Medicine now offers maternal fetal medicine across the state, with other locations at Valley Medical Center, UW Medical Center and Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital.
- UW Medicine and Trios Health in Kennewick, Washington, formed a strategic collaboration that provides Trios Health patients with prompt access to the highest level of care. The two organizations are working together to improve the quality, safety and cost-effectiveness of care in southeast Washington.
- UW Medicine entered into a long-term affiliation with Sakakawea Regional Health and Cascade Valley Hospital and opened a new UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinic at the Cascade Sakat Health Alliance facility in Smokey Point, Washington, in January 2016.

Working to increase diversity in healthcare

The UW School of Medicine changed its admission policy to consider applications from qualified students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. DACA is a national program by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to grant undocumented youth who meet eligibility requirements authorization to work in the United States.

In addition, the School of Medicine is collaborating with the School of Dentistry and the Office for Minority Affairs and Diversity to create a Health Professions Academy to recruit undergraduate students from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds for health sciences careers.

U.S. News & World Report ranked the UW School of Medicine the No. 1 primary care medical school in the nation.

Family medicine and rural health teaching programs were also recognized as No. 1 in their categories by the magazine.

Other highly ranked programs include internal medicine, geriatrics, pediatrics, AIDS and microbiology.
Our Mission:

To improve the health of the public by advancing medical knowledge, providing outstanding primary and specialty care to the people of the region, and preparing tomorrow’s physicians, scientists and other health professionals.