

2025 Harold S. Luft Mentoring Award

We are delighted to announce that
Louise Walter, MD
has been selected as the 2025 recipient of the
Harold S. Luft Award for Mentoring in
Health Services and Health Policy Research



Louise Walter, MD

The 2025 Harold S. Luft Award for Mentoring in Health Services and Health Policy Research will be presented at the [UCSF Health Services Research Symposium on April 29, 2025](#). Please register [here](#) as lunch is provided.

Louise Walter, MD is a Professor of Medicine and Chief of the Division of Geriatrics across UCSF, San Francisco VA and ZSFG. Dr. Walter is a national leader in evaluating the real-world benefits and harms of cancer screening in older persons. Her research has been translated into national cancer screening guidelines to take a person-centered approach that considers the effect of life-expectancy and patient preferences on the benefits and harms of screening rather than focusing only on chronologic age. Her 2001 *JAMA* article that transformed the approach to cancer screening in older persons was selected in a 2014 national survey of Geriatricians as one of 27 landmark articles that have advanced the field of Geriatrics.

Dr. Walter views mentoring as one of her most important academic activities and she has mentored students, fellows and faculty in her roles as Leader of the Research Education Component (REC) of the UCSF Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center, Associate Director of the UCSF Clinical & Translational Science Institute (CTSI) Career Development (K Scholars) Program, and Director of Geriatrics Health Services Research & Development at San Francisco VA. Developing and mentoring future leaders in health services and policy research in aging are very important to her, including those whose research interests align closely with hers as well as those who have chosen content areas within aging research that are different from hers. In addition, Dr. Walter is a practicing Geriatrician who provides Geriatric Primary Care for older Veterans at the San Francisco VA, which inspires her research to continually improve preventive care for older persons.

Excerpts from letters nominating Louise Walter:

"Dr. Walter is the type of mentor I hope to be someday: wise, generous, supportive, and truly cares about my professional development"

"Dr. Walter is remarkable for fostering a culture of mentorship in Geriatrics as Division Chief. She prioritizes the success of fellows and early-career faculty, ensuring that mentorship remains at the heart of the division's mission. She regularly meets with senior faculty to discuss the needs of mentees and helps others become more effective mentors. Her leadership is grounded in integrity, emphasizing the importance of doing the right thing and treating one another with respect and kindness. As such, Dr. Walters champions a culture that values well-being and work-life balance. She recognizes that professional success is deeply connected to personal fulfillment and actively supports faculty and trainees to balance their careers and personal responsibilities. She ensures that those in need receive the necessary support and accommodations to thrive both professionally and personally."

"We think of great mentors as being wise, benevolent, thought-provoking—and Louise is all of these. But I think that one of her most distinct qualities as a mentor is "good humor." She has always helped me appreciate the funny side of everyday trials and tribulations in research. Following in her example, I hope to approach my future years in research with unflagging good humor."



The Harold S. Luft Award for Mentoring in Health Services and Health Policy Research recognizes UCSF faculty who are engaged in the multidisciplinary field of health services and/or health policy research (HSR/HP), provide targeted mentoring in these specific areas, and in their mentoring roles, demonstrate the qualities exemplified by Dr. Luft. Health Services and Health Policy Research covers a range of topics, including how social factors, financing processes, health technologies, laws and regulations, and personal behaviors, among other factors, affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and ultimately, our health and well-being. The main goals of this research are to identify the most effective ways to organize, finance, and deliver high quality care; reduce medical errors; and improve patient safety.

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