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## **UCT Vice-Chancellor to run for mental health on 11 October**

### **75% of people living with mental illness in low- and middle-income countries go untreated**

About 75% of people living with mental illness in low- and middle-income countries do not receive any treatment at all – but they will be the focus of a special awareness-raising run by university leaders on 11 October 2015, in honour of World Mental Health Day on 10 October. Dr Max Price, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, will run alongside other Western Cape academics in the Gun Run in support of mental health care for economically disadvantaged people.

Dr Price says: “Mental health is tragically overlooked in the medical care of poorer communities, yet it has a far-reaching effect on any nation – its economy, job growth and performance, education, social well-being, family and community life. South Africans need to know that mental health problems can affect all kinds of people, in all walks of life and of all ages. It’s also a fascinating and important field of study, which is steadily advancing in terms of research and treatment.”

“Dignity in mental health” is the 2015 theme of World Mental Health Day, which is observed annually on 10 October. Staff at the Alan J Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health, based at UCT, have signed up 23 runners for the 11 October Gun Run, with others pledging their support from the sidelines. Other academic runners will include Professor Crick Lund, the Director of the Alan J Flisher Centre; Professor Bronwyn Myers of the Medical Research Council; and Professor Danie Visser, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research at UCT. The distances to be run are 5km, 10km and 21km.

The Gun Run initiative aims to call attention to mental health in South Africa, and to raise funds to be used in training a South African student in public mental health. The aim is not only to bolster an individual career but also to train a future leader in the mental health field, and thus benefit the mental health sector and broader society.

## **Background on Alan J Flisher Centre**

The Alan J Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health brings together academics from the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch who are actively involved in research for scaling up mental health services in Africa. Our staff are involved in teaching, consultancy and advocacy for improved mental health care and public mental health literacy. The projects currently underway range from a multi-country study (in South Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda, India and Nepal) investigating the implementation and scaling up of mental health services in primary care - to a project encouraging alcohol and HIV intervention research in South Africa.

### **Caption for jpeg attachment:**

UCT colleagues preparing to take on Gun Run for mental health (from left): Mr Yuché Jacobs of UCT's Dept. of Psychiatry & Mental Health; Prof Danie Visser, Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Dr Katherine Sorsdahl, Centre for Public Mental Health; Dr Marguerite Schneider, Dept. of Psychiatry & Mental Health; Dr Max Price, Vice-Chancellor; Mr Amit Makan, Dept. of Psychiatry & Mental Health

***ENDS***

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