

“How Safety Net Institutions Can Best Leverage Federal and State Health Reform”

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Health & Medicine Policy Research Group

Speaker Biographies

Cathy L. Hurwit currently serves as chief of staff to Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), where she also has responsibility for universal health care, senior and labor issues. Prior to joining Rep. Schakowsky’s staff in January 1999, she was a legislative affairs specialist at the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). She served as legislative director of Citizen Action, an independent consumer and environmental watchdog organization for twelve years. With her particular focus on health care, Ms. Hurwit was the founder of the Campaign for Health Security and served as its chair from 1991 to 1998. She also co-chaired the health care task force of Jobs with Justice, and provided technical assistance on single-payer and state implementation issues to the President Clinton’s Health Care Task Force.

Ms. Hurwit served as energy director for Representative Toby Moffett (1976-1979), adviser to the House Government Operations Committee’s Subcommittee on Environment, Energy and Natural Resources (1979-1982), and legislative director for Representative Ed Markey (1987-1989). She has co-authored “Insuring the Uninsured: Options for State Action,” “National Health Care: An American Priority,” and “The Managed Care Consumers’ Bill of Rights: A Health Policy Guide for Consumer Advocates.” Ms. Hurwit received a B.A. from Brown University in 1974.

John F. Holahan, Ph.D., is director of the Health Policy Research Center at the Urban Institute. Much of his work over the last 30 years has focused on the Medicaid program, as well as state health policy more broadly, and issues of federalism and health. These include analyses of the recent growth in Medicaid expenditures, variations across states in Medicaid expenditures, changes in federal – state matching formulas and Medicaid restructuring. He has conducted analyses of the cost and coverage impacts of alternative strategies to expand Medicaid coverage. Dr. Holahan has developed proposals for health system reform, most recently in Massachusetts and New York, including analysis of cost and coverage impacts of reform proposals. He has recently written on strategies to address the issues of insurer and provider consolidation, and on cost containment more generally. He has also analyzed how states are likely to be affected by the Affordable Care Act, particularly by the Medicaid expansion but also the tax credit provisions. He has published research on the reasons for the growth in the uninsured over the past decade, as well as research on the effects of proposals to expand health insurance coverage on the uninsured themselves and on costs to federal and state governments.

Gordon Bonnyman is a lawyer and the Executive Director of the Tennessee Justice Center, a non-profit public interest law firm serving low income families. He has practiced poverty law since 1973, with much of his advocacy focusing on health care financing, quality and access for uninsured and underserved families. He has written and lectured extensively about health policy and health law. His health-related work has involved testifying before Congress, arguing before the Supreme Court and consulting with governors, legislative committees and Medicaid agencies in numerous states.

Michael Gelder was appointed Senior Health Care Policy Advisor to Governor Pat Quinn on June 15, 2009. Mr. Gelder advises the governor on all matters pertaining to national health reform, Medicaid, managed care, long term care reform, global budgeting, electronic medical records and health information exchange. He represents the governor's office with health care provider associations, advocates and other stakeholders. Mr. Gelder was appointed by the governor to serve as chairman of the health reform implementation task force established by Executive Order 1012 on July 29, 2010, and serves as Deputy Chief of Staff to appropriate state departments.

For the previous five-and-a-half-years, Mr. Gelder served as Deputy Director, Illinois Department on Aging. As Deputy, he was responsible for the Department's operational divisions that manage home and community based services, federal Older American Act programs, communications and training for the state's aging network, and pharmaceutical assistance for the elderly and disabled population. Mr. Gelder also led the agency's efforts to transform long-term care and rebalance state spending so frail older adults can live their final years with dignity in their homes and communities.

Prior to joining the Department on Aging, Mr. Gelder was principal of Michael A. Gelder and Associates, Inc. Established in 1977, the firm offered consultation, technical assistance, advocacy, and policy analysis to improve access, delivery, and quality of health care services for under-served populations. For the last 20 years Mr. Gelder has analyzed federal, state, and local health care policy issues, advised community organizations and social service agencies on legislative strategies and assisted them to establish financial management capabilities to maximize Medicaid and Medicare revenue.

Mr. Gelder holds a Master's Degree in Health Administration from Washington University, St. Louis and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. He began his career with the Illinois Department of Public Health in 1973, helping Chicago-area providers and community organizations increase participation in the state's early periodic screening, diagnosis and treatment program.

Roberta Rakove is the Senior Vice President for Government Affairs at Sinai Health System, where she has worked for over 20 years. Prior to that she was the director of government affairs for the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council. Roberta is the past chair of the National Association of Public Hospitals Government Affairs Committee and serves on the federal policy committee for the Premier Hospital Alliance. She also represented disproportionate share hospitals on the Illinois Hospital Association's Advocacy Council. Roberta was the Illinois awardee for the American Hospital Association's Grass Roots Champion advocacy award in 2009. She received her BA in political science from Pitzer College and her MPH from the UIC School of Public Health.

Linda Rae Murray, MD, MPH is the Chief Medical Officer of the Cook County Department of Public Health in the Cook County Health & Hospitals System. She practices as a general internist at one of the County's south side community health centers, and is an attending physician in the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Stroger (Cook County) Hospital. Dr Murray is an adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois

School of Public Health (Occupational & Environmental Health and the Health Policy & Administration Departments). She plays a leadership role in many organizations including NACCHO's (National Association of City & County Health Officers) Health Equity & Social Justice Team, and serves on the board of the Chicago based Health and Medicine Policy Research Group.

Dr. Murray has spent her career serving the medically underserved. She has worked in a variety of settings including a Workers Clinic in Canada, Residency Director at Meharry Medical College, and Bureau Chief for the Chicago Department of Health under Mayor Harold Washington. More recently Dr. Murray served as Medical Director of the federally funded health center, Winfield Moody, serving Cabrini Green Public Housing Project in Chicago. Dr. Murray served as Chief Medical Officer - Primary Care for the twenty three primary care and community health centers comprising the Ambulatory & Community Health Network of the Cook County Bureau of Health Services, one of the largest public health systems in the nation.

Dr. Murray is the immediate past-President of Health and Medicine Policy Research Group and is the President of the American Public Health Association.

Karen Batia, Ph.D. is the Executive Director of Heartland Health Outreach and Vice President of Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights: she oversees primary and oral health services, outpatient and residential mental health and addictions treatment, refugee health programs, cross-cultural interpreting services, and a continuum of other services that support people with limited access to care. In that capacity, she is designing and implementing integrated health services in order to better position the agency to respond to health care reform.

Karen came to Heartland in 1996 to oversee HHO's homeless residential services. From 2004 until 2010, she served as senior director of Heartland Health Outreach's Mental Health & Addiction Services, where she oversaw program development, fundraising, fiscal management, strategic planning, and all other aspects of managing 15 outpatient and residential programs. Target populations were individuals who have a severe and persistent mental illness, who are homeless, and who often have a co-occurring substance use disorder, as well as refugees. During that time, she also spearheaded the founding of the Midwest Harm Reduction Institute and served as Heartland Alliance's chief clinical officer, overseeing clinical care and quality for HHO and its partner organizations, which included creating and implementing its Philosophy of Care.

Ray Wertz is President of Raymond B Wertz & Associates Inc., an employee benefits consulting firm that helps plan sponsors "re-engineer" worksite health plans and integrate personal support resources to cause employees and their families to become more engaged, knowledgeable and assertive in partnering with healthcare providers to help "bend the cost curve" and improve health status and healthcare outcomes. Previously, Ray was President of the Consumer Health Education Council (CHEC) in Washington, D.C., a program of the Employee Benefit Research Institute. While at CHEC, Ray concentrated on research and dissemination emphasizing the "business case" for employer investments in employee health and increased consumer engagement in their own health and healthcare.

Before joining CHEC, Ray was Vice President of Compensation and Benefits for Whitman Corporation in Rolling Meadows, Illinois, (originally the Illinois Central Railroad) where he developed and managed compensation and benefit infrastructures and innovative health and financial education resources for employees and their families. In addition to over thirty years' experience as a human resources executive, Ray has served on the Public Advisory Group of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, the Boards of the Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, the Midwest Business Group on Health, the National Business Group on Health and was the first chairman of the Illinois Health Care Cost Containment Council, a statewide hospital charges database. He also served on Boards of several other Chicago-based private and public sector organizations established to address health care policy, delivery, quality, education and access for low income Chicago residents.

A native of Chicago, Ray lives in Wheaton, Illinois. He has a BA and MA in History and Philosophy from De Paul University (Chicago) and a JD from John Marshall Law School (Chicago). Ray is a member of the Illinois State Bar Association; is married, has three daughters and enjoys running.

Tina Spector is Assistant Vice President, Quality for Sinai Health System. Her responsibilities include working with the hospital's leadership to establish the strategic direction of the quality program and implementing and managing associated activities and initiatives consistent with the plan. Tina has over 25 years of experience in directing programs in healthcare quality, patient safety, case management, project/data management, medical staff services and infection control. She has spent most of her career in public and private health care systems including large academic medical centers, a large county facility, and two community facilities, all of which cared for underserved populations. Tina also led the implementation of quality programming at a large AIDS/HIV clinic through a City of Chicago grant. She also spent 3 years of her career at the JCAHO working with early standards for accreditation of quality programs. Tina has served as part time faculty in the Health Information Management Curriculum at the University of Illinois (Quality course) and worked on the development of quality coursework for the University's School of Public Health where she was also a guest lecturer.

Tina has received training from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement through participation in two national patient safety collaboratives, which she facilitated for a large community hospital. She has served on many local and statewide taskforces and committees on quality and patient safety. She has been a frequent speaker on quality related topics.