

Winston Fellowship Weekly Report
Week 8: August 7 – August 11

Monday, August 7

Devon Seibert-Bailey, Vice President, and Audrey Smith, Executive Director, Strategic Healthcare:

We had a wonderful, Monday morning meeting with Devon Seibert-Bailey and Audrey Smith at Strategic Healthcare. We learned about their diverse individual backgrounds and experiences before delving more into the specific policy foci of Strategic Healthcare. Ms. Seibert-Bailey provided a broad overview of the organization and the skills she learned while working on the Hill that have been useful for her career. From there, we discussed major policy priorities for Strategic Healthcare and their clients (such as 340b drug program). Strategic Healthcare represents a wide variety of hospitals, including critical access hospitals, which is Ms. Smith's main focus as Executive Director of a new coalition for said providers.

Dr. John Fleming, Assistant Secretary for Health Information Technology, Office of the National Coordinator, HHS:

Dr. Fleming was very open to our policy questions and we got the opportunity to discuss EMRs and health information technology in depth. Specifically, he discussed his view that there is a need to undo various regulations in order to improve physician practice and efficiency. Technology can play a role in improving efficiency and quality (e.g. telehealth in rural states) but is currently a burden to many physicians – physicians spend more time on the computer than looking at their patients, as he put it. We discussed the history of regulation that led to this situation and the ways forward with HIT and healthcare data, such as interoperability regulations. We appreciated Dr. Fleming's thoughtful approach to our questions.

David Schwartz, Head of Public Policy and Government Affairs, Cigna:

David has a long history with the Winston Fellowship, and managing a variety of fellows during his time on the Senate Finance Committee, and we were lucky to get his advice and perspective on our placements. We discussed his time on Finance, the ways that the Hill has changed over time, and some nuances about working on Medicaid, in addition to fun stories. He shared his novel take on the difference between working on the Hill and private sector, and what skills from the Hill he has used in his transition, which may prove useful to both of us in the future. We concluded with a discussion about his current job responsibilities and some advice for our placements given our interests.

Tuesday, August 8

Jane Horvath, Senior Policy Fellow, National Academy of State Health Policy:

I enjoyed learning more about state health policy through our meeting with Ms. Horvath. We specifically spent a large portion of the meeting discussing a state-based drug pricing policy report that she developed for NASHP, which details over ten policy recommendations or options for states as they think about how to control drug prices, especially in Medicaid. Such

options range from increasing price transparency, to new importation laws, to regulating drug prices based on the state's "return on investment" from that drug – in other words, the price should be based on how much the state would save in other costs in the future (e.g. acute or chronic care) in the long run. She also was involved in reactions to the recent repeal and replace legislation, especially for states to better understand its impact on Medicaid. We enjoyed learning more about NASHP as an organization and about some of the other work the organization does as well.

Kim Zimmerman, Vice President, American Healthcare Association:

Ms. Zimmerman discussed the organization of AHCA, her experiences on the Hill, and current legislative priorities for AHCA. We asked specifically about how they manage to establish consensus given the diversity of providers and regions within their membership. We also discussed Medicaid given the recent legislation, and the importance of the program for long-term care. We also discussed where she saw the future of long-term care was going, where she stressed the burden of regulation and constantly thin margins will continue to put pressure on providers.

Danielle Janowski, Legislative Assistant, Office of Senator Thune:

We focused primarily on Ms. Janowski's personal background and Senator Thune's current priorities, given the recent health reform efforts. In terms of priorities, we have heard similar themes recently based on several "must pass" legislation on the horizon, such as CHIP and debt limits. Thune is also interested in rural health and workforce issues. She provided insight into the benefits and dynamics of working in a leadership office as a potential placement as well.

Wednesday, August 9

Paul Dioguardi, Founding Partner, Confluence Strategies:

We had fun discussing Mr. Dioguardi's experience in the administration during the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, among other roles. His role communicating with states about ACA implementation, such as how to establish exchanges and negotiating Medicaid expansion, was especially interesting. Mr. Dioguardi provided insight into the political nature of the ACA rollout from an "insider perspective". His stories about the intricacies of communicating the new law were engaging. He also provided some unique words of wisdom as we move towards our placements, such as to never underestimate the politics of healthcare.

Dr. Milton Corn, Deputy Director for Research and Education, National Library of Medicine:

We learned a lot from our meeting with Dr. Corn, and it was a pleasure to meet with him. I think our visit with Dr. Corn was one of the most unique meetings we have had. Although his work does not directly impact policy, we enjoyed learning about the National Library of Medicine, its place within the NIH, and his personal background. Most people are exposed to the National Library of Medicine's work through PubMed, but its much more than that. The National Library of Medicine is primarily a library but has morphed over time into an information institute, which acts as both a repository and a center for cutting edge research in biotechnology, health informatics, data science, and even artificial intelligence. I highly

recommend fellows seek the opportunity to meet with Dr. Corn in the future, even if the NLM is off the beaten path, simply to enjoy the conversation.

Elizabeth Lee and Cat Oakar, former fellows:

Elizabeth and Cat were kind enough to take us to lunch. We discussed our upcoming placement decisions, what they enjoyed about their placements, where they work now, and any advice they would have as we continue through our fellowship journey.

Veronica Jackson, Managing Director of Planning and Outreach, BCBSA:

Ms. Jackson met us for coffee and we had a lively conversation. I was not able to attend the initial meeting with BCBSA, and Ms. Jackson was kind to take another meeting, which I appreciated. We discussed the logistical and political challenges of her previous roles with HHS, as the Director of Rollouts for the ACA and the Director of Strategic Planning, for most of the Obama administration's second term. In addition, we discussed her current role with the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, which has its own challenges as an organization representing such a heterogeneous group of plans across the country. We discussed her outlook on the future of healthcare reform as well, and what implications ongoing challenges and future reforms could have for their members.

Thursday, August 10

House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Health, Majority

- Lisa Grabert, Professional Staff
- Alyssa Palisi, Professional Staff
- Stephanie Parks, Professional Staff:

We had an insightful conversation with the health team on Ways and Means. We discussed their personal backgrounds before working on the committee, as well as their current portfolios. The majority of the meeting, however, we discussed what they predict will be healthcare priorities moving forward. We heard about the usual suspects, such as CHIP and Medicare extenders. We also discussed special needs plans, price transparency as consumer empowerment, the "red tape project" (to alleviate the healthcare system from unnecessary regulatory burden), and more broadly the possible shift of focus from health reform to tax reform and their potential role in that transition as health staff.

Lee Goldberg, Project Director, Pew Charitable Trusts:

Foremost, Mr. Goldberg started the conversation by giving us an overview of the organization, their main topic areas, and recent changes to its structure. Pew works on a variety of in-house projects, which include environment, government performance, and healthcare. Mr. Goldberg's specific project revolves around long-term care and aging, focusing on reimbursement for advanced care planning, innovative models of palliative care, state efforts for advanced care, quality measures for long-term care, and electronic health records. Coincidentally, they mentioned that moving forward their focus would be hospice care. Despite repeal and replace

stealing a lot of momentum recently, they hope continue educating members – long-term care and hospice will only become increasingly important.

Alex Graf, Legislative Assistant, Office of Senator Stabenow:

I met with Alex in order to get a better understanding of what her legislative priorities might be in the future and her role during the BCRA debate. Senator Stabenow is the ranking member on the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health and my home state's Senator. During other meetings, I was told to consider doing a placement in a member office, so I used this opportunity to also explore that possibility. Alex and I had a robust discussion about upcoming priorities, such as mental health, among other topics. Senator Stabenow's background as a social worker lends to a strong passion for health.

Friday, August 11

Dr. Rodney Whitlock, Vice President, ML Strategies:

I think Dr. Whitlock provided a unique outlook on the current healthcare debates as well as placement advice given his long-term experience on the Republican side of the Hill. Dr. Whitlock discussed the pros and cons of different chambers and different committees regarding our placements, and the possible legislation that may be coming this fall. He described the future as three converging tracks: the minibus (e.g. MACRA provisions), stabilization package, and everything else (e.g. red tape relief project mentioned by Ways and Means).

Meghan Taira, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Schumer:

We met for lunch with Meghan in her office, which is located in the Capitol. We enjoyed talking about how the fellowship is going thus far, our thoughts on placements, and current politics (as expected). Meghan has a wealth of knowledge about the relationships among different members and committees, which is valuable as we learn more about the "policy process". We also discussed briefly some ways to improve the fellowship and Winston scholars program. In addition to lunch and our substantive discussion, she kindly took us on a brief tour of the Capitol building.