

**Winston Fellowship Weekly Report**  
Week 6: July 24 – July 27

**Wednesday**

Dr. John O’Brien, Deputy Assistant Secretary, and Nancy De Lew, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Health Policy, HHS/ASPE:

We had a great meeting with Dr. John O’Brien and Ms. De Lew, and we hope to reconnect again. Both Dr. O’Brien and Ms. De Lew were interested in our backgrounds and interests moving forward, and they both offered solid advice regarding our placements. Similarly, we learned more about Dr. O’Brien’s background and interests at the Office of Health Policy and what he sees as the future priorities of said office and health reform broadly. In addition, Dr. O’Brien and Ms. De Lew described the role of the office as it fit within HHS, Congress, and other agencies – specifically as the “think-tank” of HHS.

Dr. Matt Fiedler, Fellow, USC-Brookings Institution Initiative on Health Policy Economic Studies:

Dr. Fiedler joined the Council of Economic Advisors in the Obama Administration after finishing his PhD at Harvard. We discussed his time with CEA and some of the lessons he quickly learned. Specifically, he learned that not all assumptions economists make (e.g. rationality) play out in real life. We also discussed his work at Brookings. Although his current work has focused, perhaps appropriately, on quick reactions to current legislation, he hopes to transition to deeper work in the future. Generally, I enjoyed hearing the perspective of an economist on current policy discussions. Specifically, we raised the issue of the potential individual mandate repeal, which led to an interesting discussion about the varying importance of tax credits, cost-sharing reductions, and the individual mandate on individual market stabilization. Dr. Fiedler argued that the non-group market would still find equilibrium (albeit a worse one) even with the removal of CSRs, a primary concern for payers. Some individuals may even be able to afford better coverage in this world, as long as the tax credit system did not change. He recommended we speak with folks at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Dr. Rita Habib, Legislative Assistant, Patricia Ordaz, Legislative Correspondent, Senator Michael Bennett’s office:

By this time in the day, the Senate was preparing to vote on the first round of repeal and replace legislation. Unfortunately, our meeting with Dr. Habib and Patricia was cut short because of this. Nonetheless, we were able to learn more about Senator Bennett’s priorities, especially because of his position on both Senate HELP and Senate Finance Committees. Dr. Habib explained that a lot of their recent work has focused on prescription drug user-fee reauthorization, but more broadly on biosciences. The office is also looking to address other fundamental aspects of the health system, outside of Medicaid and the individual markets, which have both been center stage recently. We look forward to reconnecting with Dr. Habib and Patricia to learn more in the future.

**Thursday**

**Tom Koutsoumpas, Founder, and Mollie Gurian, Director of Health Policy and Strategy, Healthsperien:**

The meeting with Mr. Koutsoumpas and Ms. Gurian was a great first meeting for the day; we felt energized by the end. Especially because of Rachel's interest in hospice care, we were looking forward to our meeting with Mr. Koutsoumpas, who was instrumental in developing the Medicare hospice benefit. Healthsperien has a variety of portfolios, including Medicaid managed care and long term services and supports, in addition to issues related more specifically to aging. We enjoyed hearing about Mr. Koutsoumpas stories regarding Medicare and hospice, as well as the variety of important organizations that he has created. Some examples include C-TAC and the Smarter Healthcare Coalition, the latter of which is run by Healthsperien.

**Devon Trolley and John Barkett, former fellows:**

John and Devon treated us to lunch in Bethesda and we talked about the progression of our meetings, future placements, and their experiences during the fellowship. In addition, we spent some time discussing Devon's current position in CCIO. Specifically, we were curious about how the new administration has affected her or other's work in that agency. We gained valuable insight from both John and Devon that we will use as we continue through the fellowship.

**Kim Corbin, Staff Director, Joint Economic Committee (minority):**

We enjoyed meeting with Kim. In addition to discussing the role, structure, and agenda of the Joint Economic Committee, she primarily gave exceptionally honest opinions about our placement thoughts and why we should consider what. Her breadth of experience on the Hill lends to valuable, holistic advice, which fit themes we have already heard, and some new ideas. Based on my broad interests, Ms. Corbin argued for example that a personal Senate office would be an ideal location for me. She reasoned that as long as I was with a more senior health staffer, I would be able to take on more responsibility on a broader range of subjects (and get more face time with a member).

**Friday**

**Kate Mevis, Staff Director, and Carole Johnson, Detailee, Special Committee on Aging (Minority):**

Our conversation with Ms. Mevis and Ms. Johnson was fun. We started by getting a better understanding of the Committee, its function, and agenda. It is a relatively unique committee and very relevant to Rachel's background on hospice care. I think it was interesting to hear about how a committee like Aging goes about pursuing legislation through the Ranking Member and the Chairman (Senators Casey and Collins). The bipartisan process is also unique and relatively robust based on their perspective, especially because of the positive dynamic between Senators Collins and Casey. In terms of our placements, we discussed skills that we

should look forward to learning or honing, as well as what would make a good placement (e.g. solid supervision, which has been a theme).