

Winston Fellowship Weekly Report
Week 2: June 25 – June 30

Sunday-Monday, June 25-26

Academy Health Annual Research Meeting (ARM), June 25-26:

The conference was a great learning opportunity. I attended Rachel's presentation on hospice care on Sunday morning, which is a topic I had previously known little about. For the next two days, I attended various panel sessions discussing research on innovative payment models to address social determinants of health, the effect of health reform on providers and hospitals (mostly Medicaid expansion), reducing disparities, cost containment, and accountable care organizations. I would highly recommend, if possible, that future fellows seek out this conference, despite the logistical challenge (registration is before the fellowship starts). Without one of the fellows presenting, it may feel less important or grounded, but still worth considering. The topics are wide and go into some significant depth, but we also spotted former fellows and board members.

Tuesday, June 27

Wendell Primus, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the House Minority Leader:

Wendell was very welcoming and interested in talking with fellows. We discussed current and past policy issues, including the passage of MACRA and the ACA, in addition to his current perspective on the AHCA/BCRA debate. He asked Rachel to return to discuss her work on hospice care, specifically potential fraud. More procedurally, we got his impression of the differences between House and Senate and leadership versus committee. Wendell has significant historical and political insight, both on health and other major issues such as the budget process that was helpful for thinking about our placements.

Jim Mathews, Deputy Director, MedPAC:

Jim Mathews presented a different perspective on current Medicare issues. MedPAC is a proudly non-partisan and provides an essential, independent role in evaluating and recommending changes to Medicare payment policy. I learned a lot about their work and relationship to both other agencies and also the Hill, which may be helpful in future committee work. Jim was a friendly and informative and seemed willing to help us in the future, if necessary, as well.

Dan Hawkins, Director, National Association of Community Health Centers:

Dan Hawkins has made significant contributions to an important part of the healthcare system safety net and we both enjoyed his stories. I think our meeting with Dan is unique or special because his career spans not just the world of Washington DC, but also a community health center director in rural Texas. We discussed his role in getting community health centers to where they are now today, and the various challenges they

will face in the future. Dan was very welcoming, even surprising us with pizza. We also met with his congressional and federal/state affairs staff, who were able to provide in-depth accounts of their own current work.

Jay Khosla, Chief Health Council and Policy Director, Senate Finance Committee Majority:

Jay provided a unique and personal perspective on the current legislation; in his role, he likely feels the most connected to the Senate health reform efforts. He offered his advice for the fellowship and further emphasized keeping an open mind and enjoying the experience of meeting bipartisan groups and individuals. Hopefully we can get a chance to meet with him again in his new role as Staff Director.

Wednesday, June 28

Lauren Jee, Health Policy Advisor, Office of Senator Cardin:

Lauren seemed familiar with a variety of offices and specific member staff with whom we should speak, depending on our interests. She provided a different perspective than other meetings because, in describing her day-to-day work, we were able to get a better sense of what we may actually do in our placements. Like other meetings, she discussed being thrown down a different policy path than she originally expected, but to embrace the opportunities to learn. Her familiarity with other offices allowed us also to discuss what makes a “good boss” in this space, which was new. We hope to follow up on some of the names she mentioned, such as Marvin Figuero who works in Senator Warner’s office.

David Main, Partner in Nelson Mullins Riley & Main:

We had a fun policy conversation with David, intermixed with his perspective on the fellowship and how best to navigate the process. I have enjoyed, to my initial surprise, our conversations thus far with healthcare law practitioners and the work they do in the healthcare “ecosystem”. The intersection of business development, compliance, regulation, and policy is exciting. David was also able to provide a rich history of the fellowship and David Winston’s contributions to health policy. We hope to attend David’s technology talks sometime this summer, if possible.

Lauren Aronson, Principal, Mehlman, Castagnetti & Rosen:

Lauren speaks quickly and passionately about her impressively diverse healthcare policy experiences. She offered, as did everyone closely connected to the fellowship, any advice now and in the future. We inquired about her time especially in the White House and working on health reform, passing the ACA, and working with Rahm Emmanuel.

Thursday, June 29

Association of Medical Colleges Healthcare Team:

We met with primarily Karen Fischer, Chief Policy Officer, along with a panel of staff that works for AAMC's policy team. AAMC is a different type of association than we met with previously, and the organization as a whole is a bigger part of the medical school system than I imagined (from running the MCAT system to the residency matching program). I was interested mostly to hear their relationship with developing medical school curriculum, in addition to their other major policy interests (e.g. GME funding, obviously).

Elizabeth Karan, Associate and former Fellow, Feldesman Tucker Leifer Fidell LLP:

Elizabeth was a joy to meet again. We learned a lot about her history and trajectory, both politically and professionally. Like other meetings, she emphasized the fortune of being in the right place at the right time (and with the personal connections from the fellowship to help her take advantage of good opportunities). We also talked about her day to day, the clients she works for and represents. She also suggested, which has not come up before, potentially taking a CRS course towards the beginning of our placement in order to jump-start our understanding of the Senate/House process.

Julie Goon, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs, Anthem:

Julie's office was very welcoming. I appreciated business-oriented, payer perspective on the current healthcare legislation and other major laws in the last decade. Anthem is the largest business that we have met so far and we had the opportunity to meet people within Anthem working on a range of areas, from data analytics and cyber security to congressional affairs. Like other meetings, Julie brought along multiple colleagues to the meeting.

Katie Mahoney, Executive Director of Health Policy, Chamber of Commerce:

Knowing relatively little about the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to begin with, Katie described the internal functions and principles of the organization first. From there, we explored how the Chamber, like other trade associations, comes to a consensus on any given policy. Enjoyed learning more about the historically influential institution.

Friday, June 30

Weekly meeting with Meghan Taira:

In our first meeting with Meghan, we discussed the role of the mentors, how things were going at the conclusion of our second week, who we will be meeting in the next week after the holiday, and who we may want to add to our list that we would not likely have. We plan to hopefully meet in person in the next week or two. Meghan is very informative and seems to be a good source of institutional knowledge about the fellowship meetings, placement process, and post-job searches (although she emphasized focusing on the meetings for now and having fun with that opportunity for now).

Darren Webb, Health Policy Advisor, Rep. Sam Johnson office:

Darren, similar to Lauren Jee but on the House side, gave us a deeper perspective on the internal workings of a specific member office and his personal role in policy development. Throughout our meetings, I think we get a clearer picture on some of the thematic differences between the Senate and House cultures, which have myriad nuances. Darren also described in depth the members' current priorities, such as fixing restrictions in the ACA on the expansion of physician owned hospitals. He suggested that we discuss the matter with FHA or AHA – two organizations adamantly opposed. Darren provided the most traditionally conservative perspective on current legislation, an important element of our bipartisan exposure.