

Weekly Report: 9/19 – 9/23

Olivia Pham

Monday September 19, 2016

Andrew Bindman, Sharon Arnold – AHRQ

Our meeting with Mr. Bindman and Ms. Arnold was very informative! AHRQ is a relatively small agency with a relatively small budget, but has an enormous amount of responsibility regarding their research and data collection. We discussed the way the research agenda is set (Congress and other stakeholders can request services) and we then discussed some of their evidence sharing initiatives.

Blair Childs, Margaret Reagan – Premier, Inc.

Premier, as an organization, is really unique in terms of their work, mission, and clientele. They not only work with 76% of all hospitals in the country, they also have a huge stake in health reform. Mr. Childs and Ms. Reagan briefly shared their career experience, then shared with us Premier's priorities over the next year: drug pricing, The Cures and Innovation packages, and the stabilization of the Exchange.

Tuesday September 20, 2016

CTAC Summit

This summit on advanced care was truly an amazing experience! Over the course of 2 days, Kripa and I were able to attend quite a few panels on a range of topics. We heard speakers on everything from the role of faith in advanced care, introducing APMs into the advanced care system, and using psychedelics to treat patients with depression or anxiety. We were also able to meet Michael Pollen, NYT journalist and writer of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*! We saw Sen. Frist and Sen. Daschle speak about the policy landscape, and I cried when Dr. Lucy Kalanithi spoke about her husband's deterioration and subsequent death. Overall, this was an amazing summit. I truly appreciate the opportunity to attend and hope I will have the chance to do so again.

Wednesday September 21, 2016

Senator Blanche Lincoln, Mac Campbell – Lincoln Policy Group

Having heard Senator Lincoln speak briefly at a cocktail hour and been inspired, we were really looking forward to meeting her and speaking with her personally. We certainly were not disappointed. Sen. Lincoln and Mr. Campbell gave us plenty of advice on entering the Hill. Mr. Campbell had previously worked on the Senate Finance committee, so most of his advice was based on that experience. Sen. Lincoln also told us about her experience as one of the few women in the Senate at the time. It is really inspiring to hear about her tenacity and her ability to pick up on political knowledge.

Thursday September 22, 2016

Karen Ignagni - EmblemHealth

To meet Ms. Ignagni, Kripa and I took a one-day trip to NYC. However, it was well worth it. It was such a pleasure to meet Ms. Ignagni and learn about her experience at AHIP during health reform. She was very open and honest in addressing the controversy surrounding insurers at that time – she stated that she absolutely stands by her position and by her words to this very day. She is clearly an insurance expert, and has used this expertise to revamp EmblemHealth. She emphasized the importance of streamlining and remaining modern in insurance. She also gave us quite a bit of advice on entering DC politics as a woman. This was an amazing meeting, and I am so glad we had the chance to learn from her!

Friday September 23, 2016

Keith Flanagan – Director, Office of Generic Drug Policy, FDA

Mr. Flanagan was very interesting to speak to, having had experience on the Hill. He worked as an investigator and eventually a staffer on the HELP committee, which is how he became familiar with the drug space. He expressed a general frustration with the demonization of the FDA from all sides. Mr. Flanagan also shared some of the priorities of his office, particularly his work on GDUFA II. Overall, our meeting with Mr. Flanagan was very candid, informative, and pleasant.

Kristin Bass, Andy Cosgrove, Wendy Krasner, Casey Murphy - Pharmaceutical Care Management Association

Meeting with PCMA was an interesting look into the policy issues that affect PBMs, with which I was unfamiliar. Looking ahead, their major concern will be lowering drug prices. We discussed the role of PBMs in the drug pricing debate – they have very little public visibility, but they still have quite a bit of political pull.

Karyn Richman – CDC

As the Deputy Director of the Washington office, Ms. Richman's role can be generally described as the liaison to CDC officials and Washington legislators. She assists in prepping CDC officials for hearings and meetings and works on CDC messaging. We spoke at length about the challenges she faces in translating CDC science into Washington policy. Ms. Richman's career history is truly admirable, having spent time in the Finance committee, OMB, and HHS. However, she stated that she absolutely loves the CDC and is so happy to be there. I have to express my appreciation for the fact that every single CDC employee we have ever met is deeply passionate about their work – I will definitely keep the CDC in mind as I think about my next steps.