

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Health Centers at the Launch of the Coverage Expansion: Thriving or Just Surviving?

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MELINDA ABRAMS is a vice president of the Commonwealth Fund's Health Care Delivery System Reform program. Since coming to the Fund in 1997, Ms. Abrams has worked on the fund's Task Force on Academic Health Centers, Commission on Women's Health, and most recently, the Child Development and Preventive Care programs. She played a lead role in conceptualizing and launching the fund's Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) initiative, which awarded grants to state Medicaid programs to encourage innovation in the financing and delivery of preventive and developmental services provided to low-income, young children. Ms. Abrams sits on a number of national committees, including the Board of Managers of TransforMED, the PCMH Advisory Committee for the National Committee for Quality Assurance, and two Medical Home Expert Panels for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). In addition, she is a peer-reviewer for the Annals of Family Medicine. Ms. Abrams holds a B.A. in history from Cornell University and an M.S. in health policy and management from the Harvard School of Public Health.

LEIGHTON KU is a professor of health policy and director of the Center for Health Policy Research at George Washington University. He is a health policy expert with more than 20 years of experience in health policy research and analysis, focusing on health access for disadvantaged populations, including Medicaid and the health safety net. Dr. Ku has conducted a number of studies about the role of health centers in health reform, working with other colleagues in the Geiger Gibson/RCHN Community Health Collaborative. Prior to coming to GW, he worked at the Urban Institute and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. He serves on the executive board of the District of Columbia's Health Benefits Exchange Authority. Dr. Ku received his BA in biochemistry from Harvard College, his MS in nutritional sciences and MPH from University of California, Berkeley, and his doctor of philosophy in health policy from Boston University.

BROOKS MILLER has served as the CEO of Jordan Valley Community Health Center since its inception as a new start program 11 years ago. Prior to his current position, Mr. Miller served in various roles with the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine as well as the Northeast Missouri Health Council, located in Kirksville Missouri. He has a combined total of 30 years of health care related experience, in both urban and rural settings. Mr. Miller currently serves on numerous boards at local and state-wide levels. He is a graduate of Northeast Missouri State University with a bachelor's degree in business and a master's degree in education administration.

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MICHELLE PROSER is director of research at the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). She has more than 10 years of experience conducting research and analysis on health centers and their role in the health care system, as well as applying information to empower communities in their efforts to improve population health. Ms. Proser's research focus includes monitoring the impact of policy and health system changes on health centers, their patients, their communities, and payers. She also directs NACHCs' efforts to build health center capacity for community-directed translational research. Previously, Ms. Proser conducted research at the Center for Health Services Research and Policy at George Washington University focused on Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, maternal and child health, women's health, and safety-net issues. She received her master's in public policy from George Washington University and is currently working on her doctorate in public policy at the same institution.

VERNITA TODD is chief executive officer at Heart City Health Center in Elkhart, Indiana. Prior to this position, she was the vice president of Nonprofit Regional Training with the United Way of Elkhart County. She has her own consulting firm, The Human Capital Group, which specializes in working with nonprofit organizations in the areas of strategic planning, change management, leadership development, team-building, effective communication and staff development. Ms. Todd serves as a board member of the Indiana Primary Health Care Association, the YWCA of North Central Indiana, and IU Health Goshen. She holds an MBA in strategic management from the Davenport University and a master's in organizational behavior & communication and bachelors in psychology from Murray State University.