

Speaker Biographies

“Essential Health Benefits: Balancing Affordability and Adequacy”

February 3, 2012

Sara R. Collins is vice president for Affordable Health Insurance at the Commonwealth Fund. An economist, Dr. Collins joined the Fund in 2002 and has led the Fund’s national program on health insurance since 2005. Since joining the Fund, Dr. Collins has led several national surveys on health insurance and authored numerous reports, issue briefs and journal articles on health insurance coverage and policy. She has provided invited testimony before several Congressional committees and subcommittees. Prior to joining the Fund, Dr. Collins was associate director/senior research associate at the New York Academy of Medicine, Division of Health and Science Policy. Earlier in her career, she was an associate editor at U.S. News & World Report, a senior economist at Health Economics Research, and a senior health policy analyst in the New York City Office of the Public Advocate. She holds an A.B. in economics from Washington University and a Ph.D. in economics from George Washington University.

Christopher Koller became Rhode Island's first Health Insurance Commissioner in March of 2005 and was reappointed by Governor Lincoln Chafee in January of 2011. The Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner is responsible for health insurance consumer protection, the financial solvency of RI's domestic health insurers, the fair treatment of providers by insurers and directing health insurers towards policies that improve the accessibility, affordability and quality of RI's health care system. The Office is nationally recognized for its rate review process, and its efforts to use insurance regulation to promote delivery system transformation. It also is the state’s co-lead in Health Insurance Exchange planning and the designated grantee for federal funds for this effort. Mr. Koller is an Adjunct Professor of Community Health in the Program in Public Health at Brown University, is a member of the IOM Committee on Essential Health Benefits and serves in numerous national and state health policy advisory capacities. Prior to his current position, for nine years Mr. Koller was the CEO of Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, a nationally recognized community health center-based Medicaid health plan. In this role he was the founding Chair of the Association of Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP). Mr. Koller has a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College and Master's degrees in Management and Religion from Yale University.

Kavita K. Patel, is a Fellow and Managing Director of Delivery System Reform and Clinical Transformation at the Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at the Brookings Institution. She was previously Director of Policy for Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama at the White House. Dr. Patel is a board-certified physician who currently works for Johns Hopkins Medicine in a primary care clinic. Her expertise spans comparative effectiveness, delivery system reform, access, coverage and quality. Previously, Dr. Patel was Deputy Staff Director for the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee under the leadership of the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Prior to her time in Washington, Dr. Patel was a clinical instructor at UCLA and an Associate Scientist at the RAND Corporation. She received her medical training at the University of Texas Health Science Center and Oregon Health and Sciences University where she served as a Chief Resident in Internal Medicine.

John Santa is the Director of the Consumer Reports Health Ratings Center. The Ratings Center focuses on explicit approaches evaluating and comparing health services, products, institutions and practitioners. Since coming to Consumer Reports, he has represented consumers in multiple venues across the industry. He has previously worked in leadership positions for hospitals, physician groups and health insurers. Dr. Santa was the administrator of the Office of Oregon Health Policy and Research from 2000 to 2003. He helped organize and implement an evidence-based approach to prescription drug purchasing that eventually came to be known as the Drug Effectiveness Review Project. He practiced primary care internal medicine from 1976 to 1992 and 2003 to 2008 in several settings, most recently at the Portland, Oregon VA.

Janet Trautwein is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Health Underwriters (NAHU) in Washington, D.C. NAHU represents more than 100,000 employee benefits professionals involved in the design, sale, implementation and management of health plans all over the United States. Her responsibilities include oversight of all NAHU activities and primary representation of the association to the media, government agencies and elected officials at all levels. Prior to becoming the CEO of NAHU in 2005, Janet served for many years as the head of NAHU's government affairs department, working with members of Congress, senior government officials, governors, and state legislators, and directing the government and political affairs of the organization. A frequent speaker on health policy issues, Janet is considered an expert in health insurance markets and health plans of all sizes and frequently testifies before Congress on these issues. Her expertise in issues related to the uninsured, health insurance pools, risk and reinsurance pooling, health related tax issues, and both national and global health reform has been recognized throughout the industry. Janet has been published in major newspapers, including The Wall Street Journal, New York Times and Los Angeles Times and has appeared on radio and television around the world.