

**Plenary Speaker Biographies**

**Joan Alker**

*Executive Director, Georgetown University’s Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families*

Joan Alker is Executive Director at the Center for Children and Families (CCF) and for the past ten years a Research Associate Professor at the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute. Her work focuses on health coverage for low-income children and families, with an emphasis on Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Two of her most recent reports examine premium assistance options in Medicaid and CHIP and the nation’s progress covering children. She has authored numerous reports and studies on a range of issues including Medicaid waivers, child and family coverage, and premium assistance and is the principal investigator of a multi-year study on Florida’s Medicaid program.

A frequent speaker and commentator, Alker has over twenty years of experience working on issues affecting low-income families. She holds a Master of Philosophy in politics from St. Antony’s College, Oxford University and a Bachelor of Arts with honors in political science from Bryn Mawr College.

**Joan Benso**

*President and CEO, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children*

Joan Benso is President and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC). Since 1995, Ms. Benso has been responsible for the organization's daily administration and effective functioning. She is directly involved in the organization's interaction with state-level public policymakers, Pennsylvania's congressional delegation, the news media, the children's advocacy community, funders and service sectors.

Ms. Benso's leadership in child advocacy has had a profound impact on the well-being of Pennsylvania's children. PPC has championed many issues and led a broad array of coalitions during her tenure, including those which had yielded the passage of state universal children's health insurance law, creation of a state pre-kindergarten program and a more rational funding system for public education. Ms. Benso's work has led to landmark investments in early childhood education including child care subsidy, quality, Head Start and pre-K, state support for full-day kindergarten, reduced elementary class, high school reform, dual high school/college enrollment, youth development programs and the implementation of tax strategies that allow low-income working families to keep more of their wages to raise their children.

Ms. Benso has served on various state and national boards addressing health care, school readiness, youth development, college and career readiness and other critical children's issues.

**Kelly Devers, PhD**

*Senior Fellow, The Urban Institute*

Kelly Devers is a senior fellow in the Health Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Her main areas of expertise are provider payment and competition, the organization and delivery of care, and their impacts on access, cost, and quality.

Devers's current research focuses on the implementation of national and state health policy reforms, particularly as they relate to patient-centered medical homes, accountable care organizations, and related provider payment changes; hospitals' and medical groups' efforts to improve quality and efficiency through electronic health records (EHRs), process redesign techniques (e.g., Lean/Toyota Production Systems, Six Sigma), and learning collaboratives; and efforts to improve the quality of cancer care in community hospital-based cancer centers. She serves as the project director for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's National Evaluation of CHIPRA Quality Demonstrations; the Office of National Coordinator's Global Assessment of HITECH programs; the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services's Medicaid EHR Incentive Program Technical Assistance Contract; and the evaluation of the National Cancer Institute's pilot of a Community Cancer Centers Program, which is testing the concept of a national network to expand cancer research and deliver the latest, most advanced cancer care to more Americans in their home communities.

Devers has published widely in major journals of health services research and policy, while also acting as a peer reviewer for federal and foundation grants, serving on editorial boards, editing a book and special journal issue, speaking widely, and in 2008-09 advising the presidential transition team.

Before joining Urban, Devers was an associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. Before her academic position, she worked at the Center for Studying Health System Change and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Devers received her doctorate from Northwestern University and was a Robert Wood Johnson Scholar in Health Policy Research at the University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco.

**Chris Jennings**

*Founder and President, Jennings Policy Strategies*

Chris Jennings is an over three decades-long health policy veteran of the White House, the Congress and the private sector. In early 2014, he departed from his second tour of duty in the White House where he served President Obama as the Senior Advisor and Coordinator of Health Reform. He served in a similar capacity in the Clinton White House for nearly eight years.

From his positions in the executive branch, Mr. Jennings has helped implement the Affordable Care Act’s access and delivery reform provisions (for President Obama) as well as played leadership roles in the development, passage and implementation of countless bipartisan health reforms during the Clinton Administration. In particular, his stewardship of the development, passage, and implementation of the initial enactment of the Children’s Health Insurance Program in 1997 and in subsequent reauthorizations through the years was invaluable to achieving the access and coverage goals of the law. In his decade of service in the U.S. Senate, he served as the Deputy Director of the Special Committee on Aging for three Senators (Glenn, Pryor, and Melcher) and led major reform efforts in the areas of Medicaid expansions to children and frail elderly, prescription drug coverage/cost containment, and rural health care.

Outside of government service, Mr. Jennings has been a senior health policy advisor to six Presidential campaigns, including to one of his former bosses, Hillary Clinton. He has been significantly involved in children’s health initiatives outside of government. In 2014, Mr.

Jennings re-established Jennings Policy Strategies (JPS), a nationally respected health care consulting firm committed to assisting foundations, purchasers, health systems and other aligned stakeholders develop policies to ensure higher quality, more affordable and sustainable health care.

**Genevieve Kenney**

*Co-Director and Senior Fellow, The Urban Institute*

Genevieve Kenney is a senior fellow and co-director of the Health Policy Center at the Urban Institute. She has been conducting policy research for over 25 years and is a nationally renowned expert on Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and broader health insurance coverage and health issues facing low-income children and families.

Kenney has led a number of Medicaid and CHIP evaluations, and published over 100 peer-reviewed journal articles and scores of briefs on insurance coverage, access to care, and related outcomes for low-income children, pregnant women, and other adults. In her current research, she is examining implications of the Affordable Care Act, how access to primary care varies across states and insurance groups, and emerging policy questions related to Medicaid and CHIP.

She received a master’s degree in statistics and a PhD in economics from the University of Michigan.

**Carol S. Larson**

*President and CEO, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation*

Carol S. Larson is president and CEO of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, a position she has held since January 2004. Ms. Larson served as the Packard Foundation’s director of programs from 1995 through 1999 and was appointed a vice president of the organization in 2000. She is responsible for the overall management of the Foundation and its grant-making activities. In 2013, the Foundation awarded over $287 million in grants domestically and internationally in the program areas of Conservation and Science; Population and Reproductive Health; and Children, Families, and Communities.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Ms. Larson was a partner in a Los Angeles, California law firm specializing in civil litigation. She also worked in the nonprofit sector on behalf of persons with developmental disabilities.

Ms. Larson currently serves on the boards of the ClimateWorks Foundation and the American Leadership Forum — Silicon Valley. Previously, she was a board member of the Council on Foundations where she served as board chair from 2010-1012. She is also a prior board member of Northern California Grantmakers and Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families.

**Marsha Lillie-Blanton**

*Director, Division of Quality, Evaluation, and Health Outcomes, CMCS*

Marsha Lillie-Blanton is Chief Quality Officer for the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). She also is Director of the CMCS Division of Quality, Evaluation, and Health Outcomes of the Children and Adults Health Programs Group. In this role, she is leading CMCS’s effort to develop a more uniform system for measuring, reporting, and improving access and quality of care for beneficiaries in Medicaid/CHIP. The division is engaged in efforts around disease prevention and health promotion, health care delivery and payment, HIT, and external quality reviews of managed care organizations.

Lillie-Blanton has over 20 years of experience as a health services researcher and policy analyst, holding positions in academia, government, and a national health foundation. She previously served as a vice-president of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, where she worked with State officials, health provider organizations, and communities on reducing racial/ethnic disparities in health care access and quality. As a former public health analyst with the DC Commission of Public Health and a former chair of the DC Medicaid Medical Care Advisory Committee for several years, Lillie-Blanton had an opportunity to shape health programs and policies at the local level. Lillie-Blanton also has held faculty positions on the Schools of Public Health at George Washington University and Johns Hopkins University. She has authored and co-authored numerous articles, book chapters, and reports on health care access and disparities in care.  Lillie-Blanton holds a bachelor's degree from Howard University and a master of health science and doctorate degree from the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.

**Cindy Mann**

*Partner, Manatt Health Solutions*

Cindy Mann has more than 30 years of experience in federal and state health policy, focused on health coverage, financing, access and operational issues. She guides states, providers, plans, consumer organizations and foundations on creating and implementing strategies around federal and state health reform, Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and delivery and payment system transformation.

Ms. Mann joined Manatt from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), where she served as deputy administrator and director of the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services. At CMS, she led the administration of Medicaid, CHIP and the Basic Health Program at the federal level for more than five years during the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Her role included setting federal policy, supporting state program operations and coordinating policy and program operations with the Marketplace. She also was responsible for developing and executing national policies and initiatives regarding long-term services and supports and broader delivery system and payment system reform. In addition, she provided leadership in federal and state efforts to align financing and delivery systems across Medicaid and Medicare.

Prior to CMS, Ms. Mann was a research professor at the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, where she was founder and director of the Center for Children and Families. Her work at Georgetown focused on health coverage, financing and access issues affecting low-income populations.

Before coming to Georgetown, Ms. Mann served as a senior advisor at the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. She also was director of the Family and Children’s Health Program Group at the Healthcare Financing Administration (HCFA), now CMS. In that role, she developed the initial CHIP program rules, as well as led policy development related to Medicaid for children, families and pregnant women.

Ms. Mann came to HCFA from the Center on Budget and Public Policy, where she directed federal and state health policy work. She has extensive experience in state-level matters, having worked on healthcare, welfare and public finance issues in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York.

**Mike Perry**

*Partner, PerryUndem Research and Communications*

Mike Perry has conducted public opinion research for 23 years for non-profit organizations, foundations, universities, issue organizations, and government agencies. He works on today’s most pressing public issues such as poverty, obesity and hunger issues, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, children’s issues, global development assistance, substance use, and more. Mike specializes in health care research, particularly issues relating to health care reform implementation, the uninsured, public health programs (Medicaid, Medicare), and more.

Before co-founding PerryUndem, Mike was a partner at the national polling firm Lake Research Partners for 16 years. He has a BA in English from Mt. St. Mary’s University and an MA in International Relations from the University of Southern California.

**Laura Quinn**

*CEO, Catalist*

Laura Quinn currently manages and helped found Catalist, which provides comprehensive voter data and related data services to progressive organizations. Previously, Ms. Quinn served as a Deputy Chief of Staff for Vice President Gore at the White House; and as Director of the Democratic Technology and Communications Committee for Democratic Majority Leader Tom Daschle, and in communications and economic policy positions for Jay Rockefeller and Joe Biden, in the U.S. Senate. Prior to her work in business and government Ms. Quinn served in senior management and consulting rolls for several progressive not-for-profits, and national and statewide political and advocacy campaigns.

**Julie Rovner**

*Senior Correspondent, Kaiser Health News*

Julie Rovner, the Robin Toner Distinguished Fellow, joined KHN after 16 years as health policy correspondent for NPR, where she helped lead the network’s coverage of the passage and implementation of the Affordable Care Act. A noted expert on health policy issues, Rovner is the author of a critically-praised reference book *Health Care Politics and Policy A-Z*. Rovner is also co-author of the book *Managed Care Strategies 1997*, and has contributed to several other books, including two chapters *in Intensive Care: How Congress Shapes Health Policy*, edited by political scientists Norman Ornstein and Thomas Mann. In 2005, she was awarded the National Press Foundation’s Everett McKinley Dirksen Award for distinguished reporting of Congress for her coverage of the passage of the Medicare prescription drug law and its aftermath. Prior to NPR, Rovner covered health policy for National Journal's *CongressDaily* and for *Congressional Quarterly*, among others. She has a degree in political science from University of Michigan.

**Robin Rudowitz**

*Associate Director, Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured*

Robin Rudowitz is an Associate Director for the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured (KCMU), where she focuses on state and federal Medicaid financing issues and Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.  Prior to joining KCMU in 2004, Rudowitz was a Senior Manager at The Lewin Group, a health policy and management-consulting firm.  Rudowitz has worked on budget and health policy issues in different government agencies including the Office of Legislation at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for the District of Columbia, the Congressional Budget Office and the Ways and Means Committee for the New York State Assembly.

**Ramesh Sachdeva, MD, PhD, MBA, JD**

*Associate Executive Director, American Academy of Pediatrics*

Dr. Sachdeva serves as the Associate Executive Director, and Director, Department of Subspecialty Pediatrics, at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). He also serves as the Medical Director, Quality Initiatives for the AAP. Dr. Sachdeva is a practicing physician in pediatric critical care and sleep medicine at Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, and serves as the Professor of Pediatrics at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Prior to joining the Academy he served as the Corporate Vice President and Chief Quality Officer at Children’s Hospital and Health System in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He holds two Doctorates – PhD in Epidemiology focusing on outcomes research from the University of Texas, School of Public Health, and a doctorate in Business Administration from Glasgow, UK, in Management Sciences focusing on interdisciplinary methods to facilitate organizational change for enhancing quality and safety in health care. Dr. Sachdeva completed a JD from the Marquette University Law School and has served as an adjunct professor of law.

Since 2012, when Dr. Sachdeva joined the AAP, he has been successful in receiving grant support from both federal and non-federal sources. He serves as the Principal Investigator for the following three key initiatives:

1) Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) Program grant from the CDC to implement the coordinating center for five PEHSUs within the Eastern U.S.

2) Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) grant which aims at improving access for children and youth with epilepsy. This project serves as a model to increase subspecialty access for primary care using telemedicine and also to adopt the innovative approach of Project ECHO (innovative tele-mentoring technology) in pediatrics.

3) Implementation of the grant to build capacity for quality education for pediatricians in the U.S. funded by the CDC; this is based upon the pilot of the hub-and-spoke model successfully tested with support from the Tomorrow’s Children’s Endowment.

Dr. Sachdeva has authored over 40 publications; and made over 50 national/international presentations. He has continued to serve as the Chief Scientific Officer for the VPS (the national network of over 100 pediatric intensive care units).

**Anne Schwartz**

*Executive Director, MACPAC*

Anne Schwartz is executive director of the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC), a non-partisan legislative branch agency that provides policy and data analysis and makes recommendations to Congress, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the states on a wide array of issues affecting Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Dr. Schwartz previously served as deputy editor of the journal *Health Affairs*; vice president at Grantmakers In Health, a national organization providing strategic advice and educational programs for foundations and corporate giving programs working on health issues; and special assistant to the executive director and senior analyst at the Physician Payment Review Commission, a precursor to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. Earlier, she held positions on committee and personal staff for the U.S. House of Representatives. Dr. Schwartz holds a doctorate in health policy from the School of Hygiene and Public Health at The Johns Hopkins University.

**Vikki Wachino**

*CMS Deputy Administrator and Director of the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services*

Vikki Wachino serves as the Director for the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) within the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.  As CMS Deputy Administrator and Director of CMCS, Vikki leads activities related to national Medicaid and CHIP policy and program operations, and works closely with states in the implementation of their Medicaid and CHIP programs.

In her past CMS career, Vikki was responsible for implementing major provisions of the Affordable Care Act as Director of the Children and Adults Health Programs Group, and served in that role at a historic moment in the development of eligibility and enrollment policy for the low-income population.  In that capacity, Vikki played a key role in implementation of the Medicaid expansion of coverage to low-income adults.  She also oversaw the CHIP program, efforts to improve the quality of care for Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries, and worked closely with states on progress toward key goals such as delivery system reform through section 1115 demonstration waivers.

Vikki is a nationally-recognized expert on health policy, particularly as it pertains to health coverage for the low-income population.  She has served as a senior fellow at NORC at the University of Chicago, where she led the organization’s work on delivery system reform and Medicaid managed care.  Vikki has also served as Health Policy Director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Associate Director of the Kaiser Family Foundation’s Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, and as an independent consultant.  Vikki previously served in government at the White House Office of Management and Budget.  Vikki is the author of many publications on Medicaid and CHIP coverage and financing.

**Representative Henry A. Waxman**

*Chairman, Waxman Strategies*

Representative Henry A. Waxman retired from the U.S. House of Representatives where he was an outspoken champion for low-income children and families during his 40-year career. He had the distinction of serving as Chairman and Ranking Member of the Energy & Commerce Committee.  Rep. Waxman’s legislative work and tenacity has earned him recognition as “one of the most accomplished legislators of our time.” One of his most important and lasting legacies will be his successful efforts to improve health coverage for children and families. During the 1980s and 1990s, Rep. Waxman wrote a series of laws that expanded Medicaid coverage for low-income children and pregnant women and was instrumental in legislative efforts to create the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).  Rep. Waxman also led the charge to promote healthy development for children by expanding the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit. Thanks to his successful efforts to improve Medicaid and enact CHIP, the uninsured rate for children declined from 13.9% in 1984 to 6.6% in 2012.  His work on the Affordable Care Act has already made a positive impact on the lives of children, their parents and others. He is currently serving as the Chairman at Waxman Strategies, a public affairs and strategic communications firm. He also serves as a Regent Lecturer for the University of California, Los Angeles, and as an advisor and lecturer at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.