

Speaker Biographies
“State Coverage Initiatives: What’s Next?”
May 30, 2007

DONNA COOPER serves as the secretary of the Governor’s Office of Policy and Planning in Pennsylvania. The Office of Policy and Planning coordinates program planning and policy development among the executive branch agencies. The office works closely with Gov. Edward Rendell’s Budget, Legislative and Washington offices to ensure that federal and state policy options are thoroughly examined for their fiscal, legislative and programmatic consequences. Prior to assuming her Policy and Planning Office post, Ms. Cooper was executive director of Good Schools Pennsylvania, a public education advocacy organization. Earlier, she served as deputy mayor for policy and planning in the administration of then-Mayor Rendell in Philadelphia, advising the mayor on all aspects of city policy.

PAM DICKSON is deputy director of the Health Care Group at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Previously, she was the team leader for the Foundation’s Disparities and Coverage Teams. At Robert Wood Johnson, Ms. Dickson’s activities have focused on increasing access and quality of care for all Americans, with a particular emphasis on reducing racial and ethnic disparities. She believes the Foundation can be a catalyst for “making connections between forces, people and groups in a way that no other sector can do.” Before joining the Foundation in 1997, Ms. Dickson held several senior positions in New Jersey state government. In one of these roles, she served as assistant commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health, supervising the state’s all-payer hospital rate-setting system and the health planning program. As director of health care reform initiatives, she worked closely with the governor’s office, the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Insurance to implement New Jersey’s 1993 Health Care and Insurance Reform Legislation. She has held positions as a member of the board of directors of the National Association of Health Data Organizations and of the Access for the Uninsured Steering Committee of the National Academy for State Health Policy. Ms. Dickson earned an M.B.A. in health care administration from the Wharton School of Business in Philadelphia and a B.S. in education from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pa.

KRISTA DONAHUE recently joined the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services as the chief of policy. Ms. Donahue moved to Illinois last fall after spending 10 years in Washington, DC where she was most recently Senator Richard Durbin’s health care and Social Security advisor. Prior to working for Senator Durbin, she advised Senator Debbie Stabenow of Michigan on health care and aging issues. Before going to Capitol Hill, she was an account supervisor at the public affairs firm Hill and Knowlton, where she assisted clients with coalition building, grassroots and political media. Ms. Donahue holds a B.A. from the University of Michigan and a master’s in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

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ENRIQUE MARTINEZ-VIDAL is acting director of State Coverage Initiatives (SCI), a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation administered by AcademyHealth. The program works with state policy leaders to develop strategies to improve insurance coverage. Mr. Martinez-Vidal joined AcademyHealth in 2005 as the deputy director of the State Health Policy Group and deputy director of SCI. Previously he was deputy director for performance and benefits at the Maryland Health Care Commission, an independent state agency. There he was responsible for the oversight of Maryland's small group insurance market reforms; the annual evaluation of Maryland's mandated health insurance benefits; the collection and public dissemination of quality and performance information for hospitals, nursing homes and health plans; providing primary assistance on all legislative issues; and working on numerous other projects related to the affordability of health care, quality improvement, and patient safety. Mr. Martinez-Vidal formerly was a policy analyst with the Maryland Department of Legislative Services for five years. During that time, he staffed the Maryland House Economic Matters Committee and was involved with a number of health care related issues. He has a B.A. in political science and international studies from Dickinson College and a master's degree in public policy from Georgetown University.

JOY JOHNSON WILSON is federal affairs counsel and health policy director at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). NCSL represents the legislatures of the 50 states, as well as commonwealths, territories and the District of Columbia. As director of health policy, Ms. Wilson designs and implements the group's lobbying strategy on health care issues. As federal affairs counsel, she assists with overall government relations, administrative, and public affairs activities in the NCSL Washington Office. Ms. Wilson has been with NCSL since 1978. She took a leave of absence in 1989 to serve on the staff of the U.S. Bipartisan Commission on Comprehensive Health Care, better known as the "Pepper Commission." She was the liaison to groups representing state and local elected officials, organized field hearings and worked on issues related to the impact of health care reform on small business. More recently, she served as a non-voting member of Medicaid Commission established by Secretary Mike Leavitt of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Wilson received a bachelor of science degree from Keene State College in New Hampshire and a master of regional planning degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.