



Why Primary Care Matters to California

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Speaker Biographies

Palav Babaria, MD, MHS, was appointed chief quality officer and deputy director of quality and population health management of the California Department of Health Care Services beginning in March 2021. Before joining DHCS, she served as chief administrative officer for ambulatory services at the Alameda Health System, where she was responsible for all outpatient clinical operations; quality of care; and strategy for primary care, specialty care, dental services, and integrated and specialty behavioral health. She also was executive sponsor for value-based programs including the Medi-Cal 1115 Waiver.

Babaria previously served as medical director of K6 Adult Medicine Clinic, where she managed a large urban hospital-based clinic, overseeing all practitioners, improving quality of care, and implementing patient safety programs. In addition, she served on the Clinical Advisory Committee with the California Association of Public Hospitals / Safety Net Institute. She also has over a decade of global health experience, and her work has been published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Academic Medicine*, *Social Science & Medicine*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *New York Times*. Babaria received her bachelor's degree from Harvard College, and her master's degree in health science and MD from Yale University. She completed her residency training in internal medicine and a global health fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco.

Nina Birnbaum, MD, is a family physician and the medical director for innovation acceleration at Blue Shield of California. Before joining Blue Shield in April 2021, she served as the medical director for primary care for a multispecialty medical group in the Bay Area. Birnbaum's work is focused on supporting high-functioning, multidisciplinary teams and amplifying the joy of work in clinical practice.

Birnbaum received her medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and completed residency training at University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) / San Francisco General Hospital. She continues to serve her community as a primary care doctor.

Alice Hm Chen, MD, MPH, is chief medical officer at Covered California, the state's health insurance marketplace, where she is responsible for health care strategy focused on quality, equity, and delivery system transformation. Before this role, Chen served as deputy secretary

for policy and planning and chief of clinical affairs for the California Health and Human Services Agency, where she led many of the Newsom administration's signature health policy initiatives on affordability and access, and played a leadership role in the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

She previously served as chief integration officer for Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFG) and founding director of the eConsult program before becoming inaugural chief medical officer and deputy director for the San Francisco Health Network, the city's \$2 billion-a-year publicly funded integrated delivery system. A professor of medicine at UCSF, she has published extensively, including in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *JAMA*, and *Health Affairs*. Chen currently serves as board president of the Health Initiative and on the Harvard University Board of Overseers and is a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network.

A graduate of Yale University, Stanford University Medical School, and the Harvard School of Public Health, Chen's training includes a primary care internal medicine residency and chief residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Proficient in Mandarin and Spanish, she maintains an active primary care practice at ZSFG.

Kathryn Phillips, MPH, is a senior program officer on the Improving Access team at the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF), which works to improve access to coverage and care for Californians with low incomes. Phillips serves as the CHCF liaison and managing partner for the California Improvement Network, and she leads the foundation's efforts to advance primary care, including modernizing payment for Federally Qualified Health Centers and public health care systems, accelerating the adoption of integrated behavioral health care, and increasing investment in primary care. Phillips also supports the foundation's efforts to address California's health care workforce shortages. She is a member of the California Quality Collaborative Executive Committee.

Before joining CHCF, Phillips was the program director for practice transformation at Qualis Health, a nonprofit population health consulting firm. She directed regional and national quality improvement projects, including the landmark Safety Net Medical Home Initiative, which developed and tested an evidence-based framework to guide primary care redesign efforts. Her portfolio also included initiatives to advance care integration and the capacity of primary care practices to deliver behavioral health and oral health services. Phillips' experience also includes designing evidence-based purchasing guidelines and workplace health programs for the Center for Prevention and Health Services at the National Business Group on Health. She managed public-private partnerships to advance clinical preventive services, maternal and child health, and behavioral health. Phillips holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology from the University of Oregon and a master's degree in public health from the University of Michigan.

Diane Rittenhouse, MD, MPH, a senior fellow at Mathematica and professor of family medicine and health policy at the UCSF, has two decades of experience researching health care organization, delivery, finance, and workforce — and translating that research into policy. She received a Generalist Physician Faculty Scholar award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and has been recognized in the United States and Europe as a leading primary care researcher.

As director of the Transitional Program Office for graduate medical education Expansion at Mathematica, Rittenhouse has worked across specialties and disciplines in California to expand training opportunities for primary care and psychiatry physicians. She currently serves as senior advisor to the Department of Health Care Access and Information, helping launch its new Health Workforce Education and Training Council.

Rittenhouse has written extensively on a variety of primary care topics including quality of care, health equity, the patient-centered medical home, accountable care organizations, accountable communities for health, health information technology, and the health care workforce. She is a family physician by training and practiced for 10 years in a community-based faculty practice at UCSF.

Anthony E. Wright (he/him) has served as executive director for Health Access, California's health care consumer advocacy coalition, since 2002. Health Access leads state efforts to win patient protections, fight budget cuts and invest in our safety net, expand coverage, and advance equity and prevention. Wright led California's coalition effort to help pass, and later defend, the Affordable Care Act and state laws to implement and improve it. He also led campaigns to successfully pass numerous health reforms, including first-in-the-nation laws to ensure timely access to care, to stop hospital overcharging of the uninsured, and to expand Medicaid regardless of immigration status.

As a consumer advocate and community organizer, Wright has been widely quoted in state and national media. He has also worked for New Jersey Citizen Action, the Center for Media Education, *The Nation* magazine, and in Vice President Gore's office in the White House. Bred in the Bronx, Wright graduated from Amherst College magna cum laude in both English and sociology.