



Launch of California's Office of Health Care Affordability

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

Speaker Biographies

Barry Arbuckle, PhD, is president and CEO of MemorialCare, a nonprofit integrated health care system with over 200 sites of care, including hospitals and outpatient centers, across Los Angeles and Orange Counties. He has led MemorialCare since 2002 and has overseen a period of strong growth and financial performance.

Arbuckle has been the chair of the Integrated Healthcare Association and serves on its board. He is a member of the Bipartisan Policy Center's Health System Executive Council and serves on the boards of the AHA National Healthcare Systems Council, the National Health Systems Advisory Council for CVS Health, and the National Healthcare Advisory Council for Anthem.

Arbuckle speaks nationally and globally on a variety of health care topics, including health system strategy, innovation, partnerships, and succeeding in value-based contracts. Arbuckle earned a master's degree from Arizona State University and a PhD from the University of North Carolina.

Kara Carter, MBA, MSc, is senior vice president of strategy and programs at the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF), where she develops strategies, provides overall guidance, and leads the program teams in the development, execution, and assessment of CHCF's work. In this role, Carter provides thought leadership and support to CHCF's grantmaking programs and priorities, as well as CHCF's program-related investments and learning and impact functions.

Before joining CHCF, Carter was a partner at McKinsey & Company's San Francisco and London offices. She was a leader in McKinsey's Medicaid practice in the US, and supported public and private sector health systems in the US, UK, and Europe to improve quality, access, and affordability. Before joining McKinsey, Carter worked for UK-based philanthropic institutions on a broad range of topics related to poverty and community action. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia, a master's degree in social anthropology from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a master's degree in business administration from the London Business School. She serves on the UC Davis Health National Advisory Board.

Hector Flores, MD, is the medical director of the Family Care Specialists (FCS) Medical Group and FCS IPA, which collectively serve 30,000 people covered by Medi-Cal, Medicare, and commercial insurance, as well as a small percentage who are uninsured. The FCS Medical Group is dedicated to improving the health status of its patients, their families, and the broader community using culturally and linguistically competent services and by deploying performance standards that reduce or eliminate health disparities.

Flores and his colleagues at FCS continue to pursue vertical integration of their delivery system, including the integration of mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

Flores is also a founding member of the Family Medicine Residency Program at Adventist Health White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles. The program was established in 1988 to provide a high-quality education to prepare physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners for practice in shortage areas and to contribute to diversity in the health professions.

Elizabeth A. Landsberg, JD, was appointed director of the Department of Health Care Access and Information by Governor Gavin Newsom in December 2020. Previously, Landsberg was a deputy director at the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC), where she oversaw the Help Center program that assists consumers and providers with health care complaints.

Before joining DMHC, Landsberg was an advocate for health care consumers in the nonprofit realm for more than 16 years. She was the director of policy advocacy for the Western Center on Law & Poverty, where she focused on Medi-Cal, Covered California, and other issues affecting Californians with low incomes. Earlier, Landsberg was the supervising attorney for the Health Rights Hotline at Legal Services of Northern California.

Landsberg earned her law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, where she was the editor-in-chief of the Berkeley Women's Law Journal. She holds a bachelor's degree in history from Pomona College.

Vishaal Pegany, MPP, MPH, is the inaugural deputy director for the Office of Health Care Affordability (OHCA), housed within the Department of Health Care Access and Information. Before he was named deputy director, Pegany was an assistant secretary at the California Health and Human Services Agency, where he represented the agency in the policy development and negotiations of OHCA. In addition, Pegany focused on efforts to improve health care affordability, health coverage, and quality of care, including staffing the Health and Human Services secretary on the Healthy California for All Commission.

Pegany has held several positions in the public and private sectors, including working on health policy for Covered California, health analytics for Accenture, and health policy for Insure the Uninsured Project. He earned a master's degree in public policy and another in public health from the University of California, Berkeley.

Kristof Stremikis, MPP, MPH, is director of CHCF's Market Analysis and Insight team, which promotes greater transparency and accountability in California's health care system. He oversees the foundation's work to provide research and analysis to policymakers and other health leaders across the state to give a market-wide view of the complex health care ecosystem and to support informed decisions about California's health care landscape.

Previously, Stremikis served as associate director for policy at the Pacific Business Group on Health, where he also oversaw the Purchaser Value Network. Before that, he spent six years at the Commonwealth Fund as senior researcher to the president. Stremikis received a bachelor's degree in economics, political science, and history from the University of Wisconsin – Madison; a master's of public policy from the University of California, Berkeley; and a master's of health policy and management from Columbia University.

Millie Virgil, MBA, is senior vice president of transformation, operations, and customer experience at Blue Shield of California, a nonprofit health plan with 4.6 million members in the state's commercial, individual, and government markets. Virgil works toward developing personalized experiences that are automated and paperless for Blue Shield's members, providers, and employees.

Virgil has a deep background in health care business strategy, finance, and operations. Since joining Blue Shield in 2011, she led multiple initiatives to bring health care into the digital age. As vice president of digital clinical data strategy and operations, Virgil developed a strategic plan to enable universal sharing of clinical data. As vice president of finance and operations for Blue Shield's Health Care Quality and Affordability business, Virgil designed and implemented quality improvements to reduce the cost of care, which resulted in \$340 million in savings annually.

Before Blue Shield of California, Virgil led financial planning and budgeting at Pac-West Telecomm. Virgil earned her bachelor of science and master's degrees in business administration from University of the Pacific.