



## Health AI in California: The Role for State Policy

Thursday, April 16, 2026

### Speaker Biographies

**Damika W. Barr, JD, CIPP/US**, serves as the assistant general counsel for public policy at Abridge, a leading company in AI for clinical conversations. With more than 15 years of experience in the confluence of law, technology, and health, she has been instrumental in developing policy frameworks for highly innovative companies such as Google, Verily, and Lyft. In her current role, Barr directs Abridge's public policy function, dedicated to bridging the divide between AI, the practicalities of clinical technology, and regulations. She is a member of the State Bar of Pennsylvania and holds the Certified Information Privacy Professional (CIPP/US) designation.

**Kara Carter, MBA, MSc**, is senior vice president of strategy and programs at the California Health Care Foundation, 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 its 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 in social anthropology from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a master's in business administration from the London Business School. Carter currently serves on the UC Davis Health National Advisory Board.

**Adam Dondro, MPA**, serves as the director of the California Health and Human Services Agency's Office of Technology and Solutions Integration (CalHHS OTSI) as well as the agency chief information officer (AIO) for CalHHS. He brings with him a passion for government, service, and a focus on whole-person care.

Prior to this role, Dondro spent five years as the assistant director of horizontal integration at the Department of Social Services. In both positions, Dondro has focused on integrating all Health and Human Service programs to provide the best overall experience and outcomes for the public. His extensive experience includes multiple roles across California government, including five years in the State Legislature and three years with the California Technology Agency. Dondro has undergraduate degrees in psychology and political science from the California State University, Chico, and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California (USC).

**Christina Silcox, PhD**, is the research director for digital health at the Duke-Margolis Institute for Health Policy, working on policy solutions to advance innovation in health and health care and improve the regulation, reimbursement, and long-term evaluation of medical products, with a focus on digital health and artificial intelligence (AI).

Silcox's portfolio includes multiple areas in digital health policy. Currently, she is concentrating on challenges to regulation, governance, and payment of AI-enabled health tools and other digital health tools (DHTs). Her previous projects have included the use of mHealth and patient-generated health data in regulatory evaluations, characterizing real-world data quality and relevancy, the exploration of value-based payments for medical devices, and convening the National Evaluation System for health Technology (NEST) Planning Board. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Silcox also led the Institute's COVID testing work.

Before she joined Duke-Margolis, Silcox was a senior fellow at the National Center for Health Research, focused on federal regulation of and policies for medical products. She earned an MS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in electrical engineering and a PhD in medical engineering and medical physics from the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology.

**Stella Tran** is a senior program investment officer at the CHCF Innovation Fund, which invests in technology and service companies with the potential to significantly lower the cost of care or improve access to care for Californians with low incomes.

Before joining CHCF, Tran was an investment manager at Acumen America, where she invested in early-stage companies that removed the barriers to opportunity, mobility, and prosperity for Americans with low incomes. In that role, she led investments in health care, financial services, and workforce development, as well as designed strategic initiatives, including Acumen's Medicaid Innovation Collaborative. Tran also served as the impact investing vertical lead for the Emerging Venture Capital Association. Prior to Acumen, Tran focused on building the field for

social enterprises and impact investing, with roles at Just Business, the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Santa Clara University, and The Ayllu Initiative.

Tran holds a bachelor of science in accounting and information systems from Santa Clara University, where she was awarded the Miller Center's Global Social Benefit Fellowship.