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Health Coverage Fellowship Chooses Class for 2016

BOSTON – December 8, 2015 – The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation today announced that twelve medical journalists from across the nation have been selected for the 2016 class of the Health Coverage Fellowship.

The 2016 fellows are Melissa Bailey of STAT, Lenny Bernstein of the *Washington Post*, Charles Eichacker of *The Ellsworth (ME) American*, Tracy Jan of *The Boston Globe*, Lindsay Kalter of the *Boston Herald*, Soumya Karlamangla of the *Los Angeles Times*, Leanne Miller of CNBC, Jason Millman of Politico, Michaela Gibson Morris of the *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*, Lisa Mullins of WBUR Boston, Bonnie Phillips of the Connecticut Health Investigative Team, and Holly Ramer of The Associated Press.

The fellowship is designed to help the media improve its coverage of critical health care issues. It does that by bringing in as speakers more than 75 health officials, practitioners, researchers, and patients. It also brings the journalists out to watch first-hand how the system works, from walking the streets at night with mental health case workers to riding a Medflight helicopter or spending a morning in a crowded emergency room.

The program, which is entering its fifteenth year, is sponsored by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, with support from the Blue Shield of California Foundation, Bower Foundation in Mississippi, Connecticut Health Foundation, Endowment for Health in New Hampshire, Maine Health Access Foundation, National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut.

The fellowship will run for nine days, beginning April 29, 2016. It is housed at Babson College's Center for Executive Education in Wellesley, MA. Larry Tye, who covered health and environmental issues at the *Boston Globe* for 15 years, directs the program. A former Nieman Fellow and author of seven books, Tye has taught journalism at Boston University, Northeastern, Tufts, and Harvard.

Next spring's fellowship will focus on a series of pressing medical issues – from implementing health care reform to curbing costs, addressing mental illness, and redressing public health threats. Attention also will be given to breakthroughs in medical treatments and innovations in the delivery of care.

The teaching will not end when fellows head back to their stations or papers. Tye, the program director, will be on call for the journalists for the full year following their nine days in Wellesley. He will help when they are stuck for ideas or whom to call on a story. He also will assist in thinking out projects and carving out clearer definitions of beats.

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