

Health Coverage FellowshipSM

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CONTACT: Larry Tye

(617) 491-8709

larrytye@aol.com

Health Coverage Fellowship Chooses Class for 2005

BOSTON – Ten medical journalists from across New England today are being named to the 2005 class of the Health Coverage Fellowship.

The fellowship, the first of its kind in the country, is designed to help the New England media do a better job covering critical health care issues. It does that by bringing in as speakers more than 50 top health officials, policy people, and researchers. It also brings the fellows 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.

The program, now entering its fourth year, is sponsored by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, with help from the Maine Health Access Foundation, Connecticut Health Foundation, Jane's Trust, New Hampshire's Endowment for Health and other philanthropies. For its first two years, eligibility was limited to journalists from newspapers, radio stations and TV outlets in Massachusetts; last spring the fellowship expanded to include reporters and editors from New Hampshire and Maine, and this new group includes journalists from Vermont and Connecticut.

The program will run for nine days, beginning April 29. It is housed at Babson College's Center for Executive Education in Wellesley, and is operated in collaboration with the region's leading journalism organizations. Larry Tye, who covered medicine and health at the *Boston Globe* for 15 years, directs the program. A former Nieman Fellow, Tye has taught journalism at Boston University, Northeastern, Tufts and Harvard.

The 2005 class includes Scott Allen of the *Boston Globe*, Thomas Caywood of the *Boston Herald*, Sera Congi of WCAX-TV in Vermont, Pamela Ferdinand, a Boston-based freelancer and former New England Correspondent for the *Washington Post*, Kerry Grens of New Hampshire Public Radio, Meg Haskell of the *Bangor Daily News*, Anya Huneke of New England Cable News, Claudia Kalb of *Newsweek*, Robin Lord of *Cape Cod Times* and Hilary Waldman of the *Hartford Courant*.

The fellowship will focus on a series of pressing health care issues, from insuring the uninsured to the plight of community hospitals, backups in emergency rooms, and the ongoing nursing shortage. Attention also will be given to public health scares, from understanding the deadly powers of new illnesses like SARS and old ones like the flu, to knowing the capabilities – and limits – of public health authorities who respond to terrorism and disease outbreaks.

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

The program is operated with help from a steering committee that includes George Donnelly, editor of the *Boston Business Journal*; Sam Fleming, News Director at WBUR-FM; Brenda L. Reed, Executive Director of the New England Press Association; Terry L. Schraeder, M.D., the former medical reporter at WCVB-TV in Boston; and B. Allan Sprague, President of the Massachusetts Broadcasters Association.