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Health Coverage Fellowship Chooses Class for 2015

BOSTON – December 15, 2014 – The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation today announced that twelve medical journalists from across the nation have been selected for the 2015 class of the Health Coverage Fellowship.

The 2015 fellows are Deborah Becker of WBUR-Radio in Boston, Evelina Burnett of Mississippi Public Broadcasting, Jeff Cohen of WNPR in Connecticut, Jennifer Haberkorn of Politico, Joe Lawlor of the *Portland (ME) Press Herald*, Noam Levey of the *Los Angeles Times*, Shefali Luthra of Kaiser Health News, Abby Phillip of the *Washington Post*, Jack Rodolico of New Hampshire Public Radio, Jonathan Saltzman of the *Boston Globe*, Susan Spencer of the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, and Laura Starecheski of National Public Radio.

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 fourteenth 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, Kaiser Family Foundation, Maine Health Access Foundation, National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation, and the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut.

The fellowship will run for nine days, beginning April 24. 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 six 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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