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Health Coverage Fellowship Chooses Class for 2018

BOSTON – December 14, 2017 – The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation today announced that twelve medical journalists from across the nation have been selected for the 2018 class of the Health Coverage Fellowship.

The 2018 fellows are Yasmin Amer of Boston's WBUR Radio, Adam Cancryn of *Politico*, Liora Engel-Smith of the *Keene (NH) Sentinel*, Amina Khan of *The Los Angeles Times*, Greg Kesich of *The Portland Press Herald*, Aneri Pattani of New York's WNYC Radio, Laura Rice Rea of KUT Radio in Austin, TX, Bram Sable-Smith of KBIA Radio in Columbia, MO, Marisa Taylor of *Kaiser Health News*, Bob Tedeschi of STAT, William Wan of *The Washington Post*, and Anna Wolfe of *The Jackson (MS) Clarion-Ledger*.

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 seventeenth 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, Endowment for Health in New Hampshire, The Kresge Foundation, Maine Health Access Foundation, Missouri Foundation for Health, National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and, in Texas, the Episcopal Health Foundation, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, and St. David's Foundation.

The fellowship will run for nine days, beginning April 27, 2018. 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 issues – from the ongoing fight over the future of Obamacare to curbing drug costs, addressing mental illness, redressing public health threats, and rethinking end-of-life issues. Attention also will be given to breakthroughs in medical treatments and innovations in 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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