



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Health Coverage Fellowship Chooses Class for 2017**

**BOSTON** – December 19, 2016 – The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation today announced that twelve medical journalists from across the nation have been selected for the 2017 class of the Health Coverage Fellowship.

The 2017 fellows are Rae Ellen Bichell of National Public Radio, Mara Lee of the *Hartford Courant*, Jenny Gold of Kaiser Health News, Amy Masters of Boston's WCVB TV-*Chronicle*, Casey McDermott of New Hampshire Public Radio, Laurie McGinley of *The Washington Post*, Tom Melville of Boston's WBUR Radio, K.C. Myers of the *Cape Cod Times*, Geoff Pender of *The (Jackson MS) Clarion-Ledger*, Rebecca Plevin of Los Angeles' KPCC Radio, Matthew Stone of the *Bangor (ME) Daily News*, and Megan Thielking of *STAT-Boston Globe*.

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 sixteenth 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, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The fellowship will run for nine days, beginning April 28, 2017. 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 fight over repealing/replacing Obamacare to curbing drug costs, addressing mental illness, and redressing public health threats. 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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