



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Health Coverage Fellowship Chooses Class for 2021**

**BOSTON (March 3, 2021)** – The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation today announced that twelve medical journalists from across the nation have been selected for the 2021 class of the Health Coverage Fellowship.

The 2021 fellows are Benjamin Bragdon of the *Kennebec Journal/Morning Sentinel*, Jenna Carlesso of the *Connecticut Mirror*, Caroline Covington of Texas Standard-KUT Radio, Alli Fam of New Hampshire Public Radio, Beth Healy of WBUR Radio in Boston, Ana Ibarra of *CalMatters*, Nadia Kounang of CNN, Fenit Nirappil of the *Washington Post*, Deanna Pan of the *Boston Globe*, Jennifer Portman of *USA Today*, Will Stribling of *Mississippi Today*, and Sarah Toy of the *Wall Street Journal*.

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 visiting the world's biggest brain bank.

The program, which is entering its twentieth 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, 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 September 17, 2021. 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 eight books, Tye has taught journalism at Boston University, Northeastern, Tufts, and Harvard.

Next fall's fellowship will focus on a series of pressing issues – from preventing pandemics to treating mental illness, rooting out racial biases, redressing homelessness, and rethinking end-of-life care. Attention also will be given to breakthroughs in medical treatments and curbing health-care costs.

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.

### **About the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation**

The mission of the [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation](#) is to expand access to health care for low-income and vulnerable individuals and families in the Commonwealth. The Foundation was founded in 2001 with an initial endowment from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. It operates separately from the company and is governed by its own Board of Directors.