



John Q Goes to Washington: Health Policy Issues in Popular Culture

Biographies of Speakers

Neal Baer is Executive Producer of the series *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*. Until October 2000, he was Executive Producer of *ER*. Dr. Baer was nominated for six Emmys for *ER*, four times for producing and twice for writing. His other screenwriting credits include *Warriors* and an episode of *China Beach*, one of five scripts nominated by the Writers' Guild of America for best episodic drama of 1990. He also directed and wrote the ABC Afterschool Special *Private Affairs*, dealing with sexually transmitted diseases, which was selected as the best children's drama of the year in 1990 by the Association of Women in Film and Television. He has written *The Doctor Corps*, a feature film for Twentieth Century Fox, and *Outreach*, a pilot for the WB Network.

Dr. Baer graduated from Harvard Medical School in June of 1996. He received the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Scholarship in 1994 from the American Medical Association as the outstanding medical student who has contributed to promoting a better understanding of medicine in the media. He was selected as a Mass Media Fellow by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and worked as a television science producer.

Dr. Baer's primary medical interests are in adolescent health. He graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BA in Political Science from Colorado College; holds master's degrees from Harvard Graduate School of Education and Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in Sociology; and spent a year at the American Film Institute as a directing fellow. This year he received an honorary Doctor of Laws from Colorado College. Dr. Baer serves on the boards of numerous organizations related to health care, including the Venice Family Clinic, the Grace Center of Pasadena, California, and the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS).

Karen Ignagni is President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Association of Health Plans (AAHP). Ms. Ignagni is one of the nation's leading authorities on public policy, legislative, and public affairs issues challenging the managed care industry today.

Ms. Ignagni has headed the AAHP, which has 1,000 member health plans, since 1993. In March 2001, *George* magazine placed Ms. Ignagni at #21 on a new list of the 50 Most Powerful People in Politics. In 1999, *Washingtonian* magazine named her one of the top three "Top Guns" of all industry trade association heads. At the height of the patient protection debate in the United States Senate in 1999, *The New York Times* profiled Ms. Ignagni, writing, "In a city teeming with health care lobbyists, Ms. Ignagni is widely considered one of the most effective. She blends a detailed knowledge of health policy with an intuitive feel for politics." In its September/October 2000 edition, *Regardies* magazine named Ms. Ignagni to its exclusive Power 100 list of the most powerful people in all sectors of private-industry in Washington. In Summer 2000, Ms. Ignagni was honored by the New Leaders, a non-profit, non-partisan organization committed to empowering the African-American community, for "her efforts to improve the lives of women through activism and advocacy and the supporting the important health care needs of women of color."

Ms. Ignagni has a long and distinguished involvement in health care issues. Prior to coming to AAHP (formerly Group Health Association of America), Ms. Ignagni directed the AFL-CIO Department of Employee Benefits. In the 1980s, she was a professional staff member of the U.S. Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, preceded by work at the Committee for National Health Insurance and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Ignagni holds an M.B.A. from Loyola University and an undergraduate degree from Providence College.

Jim Kearns started out writing for the theater. Although he lived in New York at the time, his first play *Days in the Dark Light* was produced in Los Angeles by American Theater Arts. His second play, *Favorite Sons*, was produced by the Actors Producing Company in New York and was chosen as a "Selection Committee Finalist" at the Eugene O'Neill Center in Waterbury, CT. Both plays received quite a bit of attention from television and film producers in Hollywood. From this, various writing opportunities were offered to him, especially in hour-long dramatic series. Some of the dramatic series for which he wrote were: *Highway To Heaven* with Michael Landon, *A Year in the Life* (created by Joshua Brand and John Falsey), and the critically praised CBS crime drama, *Wiseguy*.

Mr. Kearns' first feature script *Dead of Summer* was sold to Universal, and although never produced, it led to other writing opportunities in both feature films and long form television. Mr. Kearns has written several television movies for CBS, ABC, NBC and FOX. Last summer CBS completed filming a script written by him entitled *Code 1114*. (Because the subject matter dealt with terror in the skies, the movie has not yet aired.) *John Q* was nine years in the making and is Mr. Kearns' first feature film to be produced. He is currently adapting *Slightly Out of Focus*, the extraordinary autobiography by the noted war photographer Robert Capa, for Walt Disney Pictures.

Ron Pollack is the Founding Executive Director of Families USA, the national organization for health care consumers. Families USA's mission is to achieve high-quality, affordable health coverage for everyone in the U.S. In 1997-1998, Mr. Pollack was appointed the sole consumer organizational representative on the Presidential Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry. In that capacity, Mr. Pollack helped prepare the Patients' Bill of Rights that has passed in many state legislatures and that is also pending in the Congress. Mr. Pollack is also the Founder and Chair of the Health Assistance Partnership, an entity that works with health care ombudsman programs across the country to help consumers navigate the increasingly complex U.S. health care system.

Families USA, which Mr. Pollack directs, has prepared numerous reports and analyses on health care generally, and, in particular, on health coverage for uninsured and underinsured families, public health programs (such as Medicaid and Medicare), prescription drug issues, HMO-related consumer protections, and long-term care. Those reports and analyses are frequently cited at Congressional hearings, in state legislatures, by the media, and by consumer organizations. Mr. Pollack is a frequent guest on a variety of television and radio programs, such as *The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer*, NBC's *Today* show, ABC's *Good Morning America* and *Nightline*, CNN's *Larry King Live* and *Crossfire*, NPR's *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*, and many others, and he is often quoted in such leading newspapers as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. Prior to his current position at Families USA, Mr. Pollack was Dean of the Antioch University School of Law. He was also the Founding Executive Director of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).

Vicky Rideout is Vice President of the Kaiser Family Foundation and Director of the Foundation's Program for the Study of Entertainment Media and Health. At the Foundation, Ms. Rideout initiated public education campaigns with several media partners, including MTV, BET and UPN. The public service ads and full-length programming she helped develop have received numerous awards, including a Cine Golden Eagle, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences' Ribbon of Hope Award, several Telly and Aegis Awards for advertising and two national Emmy Award nominations. Ms. Rideout currently oversees the Foundation's research agenda on the impact of entertainment media on health. She has directed numerous media-related studies on topics such as children's media use, sexual content on television, the V-Chip, teens and the Internet, and the impact of television content on viewers. Prior to joining the Foundation, Ms. Rideout was the founding director of the Children & The Media program at the national children's advocacy group Children Now. She graduated with honors from Harvard University and has a Masters Degree in American History from Syracuse University.

Diane Rowland is the Executive Vice President of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the Executive Director of the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. She is also an adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the School of Hygiene and Public Health of the Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Rowland is a noted authority on health policy, Medicare and Medicaid, and health care for poor and disadvantaged populations. Her federal health policy experience includes the staff of the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment of the Committee on Energy and Commerce in the House of Representatives of the U.S. Congress, as well as senior health policy positions in the Department of Health and Human Services in the Office of the Secretary and the Health Care Financing Administration. Dr. Rowland specializes in issues related to health insurance coverage, access to care, and health care financing for low-income, elderly, and disabled populations and has published widely on these subjects. She is the editor of *Financing Home Care and The Medicaid Financing Crisis: Balancing Responsibilities, Policies, and Dollars*, and is a co-author of *Medicare Policy: New Directions for Health and Long-Term Care of the Elderly and Health Care Cost Containment: Lessons from the Past and a Policy Proposal for the Future*.

Dr. Rowland serves on the Board of the Academy for Health Services Research and Health Policy, the Secretary's Task Force on Infant Mortality, and the Commonwealth Fund Task Force on Health Insurance for Working Americans. She is a founding member of the National Academy for Social Insurance, Past President and Fellow of the Association for Health Services Research, and a Brookdale Senior Fellow. Dr. Rowland holds a Bachelor's degree from Wellesley College, a Masters in Public Administration from the University of California at Los Angeles and a Doctor of Science in health policy and management from the Johns Hopkins University.

Joseph Turow is Robert Lewis Shayon Professor of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication. He is the author of more than 50 articles and 7 books on mass media industries, including *Playing Doctor: Television, Storytelling and Medical Power, a History of TV's Medical Programs*. *The New York Times* called his book "a shrewd survey" that "contrasts the actual condition of the American medical system with its portrayal on television." Related articles Dr. Turow has published include *Curing Television's Ills: The Portrayal of Health Care*, and *Television Entertainment and the U.S. Health Care Debate*.

Dr. Turow's continuing work on the Internet and the family has received a great deal of attention from the popular press as well as the research community. He has written about media in the popular press, including *American Demographics* magazine and *The Los Angeles Times*. The winner of a number of conference-paper and book awards, he was a Chancellor's Distinguished Lecturer at LSU during Spring, 2000. Professor Turow currently serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *The Encyclopedia of Advertising*, the *Sage Annual Review of Communication Research*, and *New Media and Society*.