The Health Coverage Fellowship

2026 Schedule of Events

September 11 – September 19

Friday, September 11: **Kickoff**

4:30-6 p.m.: Orientation meeting for fellows

6-8:30 p.m.: Evening program

Introduction of the fellowship in its 25th year: **Amanda Yarnell**, Director, Harvard School of Public Health's Center for Health Communication.

Introduction of the fellows and keynote speaker: **Larry Tye**, Fellowship Director.

2026 Fellows: Scott Hensley from NPR, Hannah Kaufman of the *Kennebec Journal* & *Morning Sentinel* in Maine, Anuradha Mascarenhas from *Indian Express,* Sarah Neville of the *Financial Times,* Sarah Owermohle from CNN, Daniel Payne of STAT, Maggie Penman from the *Washington Post,* Sarah Rahal of the *Boston Globe,* Amanda Seitz from *KFF Health News*, Allen Siegler of *Mississippi Today,* Sheryl Gay Stolberg from the *New York Times,* Cris Villalonga-Vivoni of *Hearst Media/CT Insider*, and Nicole Villalpando from the *Austin American-Statesman*.

Keynote**:** ***The role of the journalist in an age of tumult***

Joe Kahn is executive editor at the *New York Times*. A two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize and native of Massachusetts, Kahn began his journalism career at the *Dallas Morning News,* then was a China correspondent at the *Wall Street Journal.* He joined the *Times* in 1998, serving as a business reporter, foreign correspondent, international editor, managing editor and, since 2022, the paper's top editor.
Joe will be in-conversation with **Rick Berke,** co-founder and executive editor of STAT and a veteran of the *Baltimore Evening Sun, New York Times and* Politico.

Saturday, September 12: **Setting the stage**

8:30-10:30 a.m. ***New risks and rewards for journalism and journalists***

Over breakfast, we talk about the future of journalism and the challenges journalists face these days, with Columbia Journalism School Dean and *New Yorker* staff writer **Jelani Cobb.** NPR Editor-in-Chief **Tommy Evans**, Reuters Editor-in-Chief **Alessandra Galloni**, and *New York Times* Executive Editor **Joe Kahn**.

10:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. ***Thinking big on healthcare***

Dr. **Robert Califf** was FDA commissioner under Presidents Obama and Biden. **Rep. Chellie Pingree** of Maine is ranking member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, which funds a range of health programs. Dr. **Willie Underwood III**, an expert on health care disparities, is president of the American Medical Association.

1-2 p.m. ***Rest up***

2 p.m. ***A Sox comeback, starting tonight***

We head to Fenway Park for a tour with Chief Baseball Officer **Craig Breslow** and *Boston Globe* Sox writer **Alex Speier**, and to watch the Olde Towne team trounce the Kansas City Royals.

Sunday, September 13: **New ways to tell stories and root out medical mistakes**

9:30-11:15 a.m. ***Care for the long-term and the future***

We look at creative care models with these hosts: **Hugo Aerts** of Mass General Brigham's AI-in-Medicine program; **Esther Kim** of MGH's Digital Emerging Technologies; **Rhonda Pieroni**, president of the Hearth community for formerly homeless seniors; and **Dorene Rentz**, co-director of Brigham and Women's Center for Alzheimer's Research and Treatment.

12:15-1:45 p.m. ***Creating content/making waves***

Over lunch, we discuss how the brave not-so-new worlds of content creation and influencing can create new ways for journalists to reach broader audiences with Dr. **Sasha Hamdani,** a psychiatrist and mental-health educator on social media and beyond; **Ryan Kellett,** a journalist, consultant, and relentless adopter of new technologies; and **Amanda Yarnell**, a journalist–turned–communication ace who helps creators spread evidence-based public-health information.

1:45-3:45 p.m. ***Down time***

Catch our breaths – exercising, napping, or whatever we want.

4-5 p.m. ***Debrief***

We share what we saw and heard at this morning's breakouts and start thinking about how to translate that into stories.

5-7 p.m. ***Med errors and mea culpas***

Over dinner, our speakers show us new ways to understand patient safety and reduce medical errors. Dr. **Kimi Kobayashi** is chief medical officer at UMass Memorial. **Linda Kenney** directs the peer support program at Massachusetts' Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety. Dr. **Rick van Pelt** is chief clinical transformation officer at the University of Alabama-Birmingham Health System.

Monday, September 14: **Gains and gaps in mental health**

9-10:45 a.m. ***Research Cuts and Consequences***

Ron Daniels is president of Johns Hopkins. **Alan Garber** is president of Harvard**. Domenico Grasso** is president of the University of Michigan. **Ted Mitchell** is president of the American Council on Education.

11 a.m.-1:15 p.m. ***Parity and much more on mental illness***

Andrea C. Beckel-Mitchener is a neuroscientist and acting director of the National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. **Josh Gordon** ran NIMH under presidents Trump and Biden and chairs the psychiatry department at Columbia University. Dr. **Tom Insel** ran NIMH under presidents George W. Bush and Obama and has launched a series of mental health start-ups.

1:15-4 p.m. ***Rest up***

Take a nap, head to the fitness center, or get ready any way you choose for the long night ahead.

5:30-7:30 p.m. ***Homelessness: Who, why, and what to do***

Setting a context for what we'll see on Boston's streets are Boston Health Care for the Homeless founder and president Dr. **Jim O'Connell**, BHCHP Chief Medical Officer **Denise De Las Nueces,** Pine Street Inn Executive Director **Lyndia Downie**, Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Health Dr. **Robert Goldstein**, and Boston Emergency Medical Services Chief **Jim Hooley**.

8 p.m.-midnight ***Street stories***

We ride with the Pine Street vans or EMS ambulances, or divide into groups to visit the McInnis House respite center, Beth Israel Deaconess' emergency department, or the streets of Boston.

Tuesday, September 15: **Preventing pandemics, protecting moms/kids, and living longer**

7:45-9 a.m. ***Waking up slowly***

After a late night, sleep in or join us over breakfast to talk about what you saw on the streets.

9-11 a.m. ***Pandemics past and future***

Jennifer Nuzzo directs the Pandemic Center at Brown University. Dr. **Rochelle Walensky** ran the Centers for Disease Control under President Biden. Dr. **Atul Gawande** ran the global health programs at USAID under President Biden.

11:15 a.m.-1 p.m. ***Caring for women***

Over lunch, we discuss challenges of women's and maternal health with Dr. **Allison Bryant**, a maternal fetal medicine specialist who oversees health equity programs at Mass General Brigham; **Jessica Cohen**, professor of health economics at HSPH; and Dr. **Ana Langer,** head of Harvard's Women and Health Initiative.

1-4 p.m. ***Down time***

4-5:45 p.m. ***Meditations***

We get a hands-on look at complementary medicine with **Richmond Dickson** of the New England School of Therapeutics, neuromuscular therapists **Sarah Ernst-Edwards and Lisa Gorman**, **Lisa Keyes** of Dedham Acupuncture, Dr. **Darshan Mehta** from the Benson-Henry Mind-Body Institute, Director of Sleep Medicine **Susan Redline** from Brigham and Women's Hospital, **David Sholemson** of 3 Body Healing Arts, and reflexologists **Barbara Strassman** of Heart and Soul Holistic Healing Center and **Susan Makuch-Andrews** of Marc of Healing.

6-8 p.m. ***Living longer (and better)***

Will Mair is director of HSPH's Healthy Aging Initiative, which aims to extend the time people live free from disease and disability. Dr. **Thomas Perls** is founder and director of the New England Centenarian Study, the world's longest-running and largest study of 100-year-olds and their families.

Wednesday, September 16: **Staying alive/staying healthy**

8:45-10:15 a.m. ***Suicide: An epidemic and an enigma***

Michael Lindsey, dean of the NYU School of Social Work, focuses on preventing suicides among Black youths. **Matt Nock**, chair of Harvard's psychology department, has spent his life probing why people self-harm. Dr. **Jordan Smoller**, head of psychiatric genetics at Mass General, is studying how big data and genomics can identify suicide risks.

10:30-noon ***What does it mean to eat healthy?***

Calley Means is a top aide to the secretary of health and human services and a driving force in the Make America Healthy Again movement. Dr. **Walter Willett** of Harvard has spent his life researching how diet affects major illnesses like cancer and heart disease

12:15-2 p.m. ***Digging deep and hitting (Pulitzer/Emmy/Murrow) gold***

Duaa Eldeib reports for ProPublica on healthcare for vulnerable populations, including mothers, children, and Medicaid recipients. **Charlie Ornstein,** is managing editor-local at ProPublica and past president of the Association of Health Care Journalists.

2-5 ***Walk, run, bike, talk, sleep***

Your call on how to relax.

5:15-5:45 ***Publicly insured***

Dr. Mehmet Oz, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, explains what's ahead for both.

5:45-6:15 ***Perks of the profession***

Henry Chu, curator of Harvard's Nieman Fellowship, and **Usha Lee McFarling**, who runs the MIT-Knight Science Fellowship, talk about their programs' who's, how's and what's.

Thursday, September 17: **Stories that need telling inside medicine and out**

8:45-10:15 a.m. ***The art of the interview***

Dave Davies was a longtime reporter at WHYY in Philadelphia and host on NPR's *Fresh Air*. **David Marchese** is co-host of the *New York Times* series "The Interview."

10:30-11:30 a.m. ***Debrief***

We talk amongst ourselves about what we've seen and heard, and continue thinking about how to translate that into stories.

11:45 a.m.-1:45 p.m. ***Corporate medicine and its side effects***

Dr. **Zirui Song** teaches at Harvard Medical School and is an expert on health care spending. **Lee Robinson** oversees behavioral health at MassHealth.

2:30-4 p.m. ***View from the Top: the New NIH***

Dr. **Jay Bhattacharya** is director of the National Institutes of Health and oversees the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

4-5:45 p.m. ***Cooling down***

A bit of down town before a busy night.

6-8 p.m. ***Long-form storytelling***

Neuroscientist **Lisa Genova** is the author of *Still Alice* and other bestsellers. **Dave Davies** interviews authors and others on *Fresh Air.* **Peter Hubbard** is publisher at HarperCollins' Mariner Books imprint. **Howard Yoon** is a partner and literary agent at William Morris Endeavor.

Friday, September 18: **New ways to control disease and new challenges to journalism**

9:30-11 a.m. ***On health care's cutting edge***

Dr. **Sabina Berretta,** who runs McLean Hospital's brain bank, talks us through her collection. Executive Director **Mike Kelly** introduces us to his programs and students at the Higashi School, with its unique approach to autism. Editor-in-Chief **Eric Rubin** helps us understand the inner workings of his *New England Journal of Medicine*. Mass General Brigham Cancer Institute Director **David Ryan** walks us through recent treatment breakthroughs. Director **Steve Seiner** shows us how ECT works at McLean. Dr. **Nathaniel Van Kirk** explains how McLean treats chronic OCD.

Noon-1:30 ***Ebola and other global challenges***

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is Director-General of the World Health Organization.

1:45-5 ***An Afternoon Off***

We head to Walden Pond for a tour, walk, swim, or simply sitting at the water's edge.

6-8 ***Goodbye dinner***

It's a clambake, on campus, with toasts and a surprise guest.

Saturday, September 19: **Wrapping up**

9-11:30 a.m. ***Translating your list into stories***

We break into three groups, with each journalist presenting her or his list of stories while the rest of us suggest sources, storytelling strategies, and other ways to make those ideas resonate with readers, listeners, and editors. Group leaders are **Rob Weisman**, **Tom Melville**, and **Larry Tye.**

Melville was the longtime news director at WBUR in Boston.

Weisman was a health and tech reporter and editor at the *Boston Globe.*

Noon-1 p.m. ***Goodbyes***

Lunch with our group, then you can head home or anywhere.