HPM IN ACTION

- New study by Arnie Epstein, Ben Sommers, Bob Blendon, & Yelena Kuznetsova: Low-income adults favor Medicaid expansion & view Medicaid as high quality coverage. [http://tinyurl.com/ngyqxcc]

- This January, FRONTLINE on PBS presents "Being Mortal." This documentary is based on Atul Gawande's new book, "Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End. Here's a sneak peak, [http://tinyurl.com/5f5F22]

- ACA health premiums are looking stable heading into 2015 according to Kathy Swartz. [http://ow.ly/CvF22]

- Fear trumps facts says Lisa Rosenbaum in her most recent NEJM article, Invisible risks, emotional choices - mammography and medical decision making. [http://tinyurl.com/be5iD2w]

- Congrats to Kate Baicker – new Group Insurance Commission Chair!


- The department is delighted to welcome Kirkpatrick (Kirk) Vanda, Deputy Director of the Leading Change Studio with Howard Koh!

- Congratulations to Meredith Rosenthal for her election to the Institute of Medicine! [http://tinyurl.com/ffsik]

- New research released by Amy Cohen, Deborah Azrael, & Matt Miller on, Rate of mass shootings in U.S. has tripled since 2011. [http://ow.ly/D0q7N]

- Hospitals switching to for-profit status had no change in quality from Karen Joynt, John Orav, and Ashish Jha. [http://ow.ly/78K21]

- Has Obamacare led to higher costs for businesses? Kate Baicker comments. [http://ow.ly/3Qhe2]

- Check out the new MOOC, Entrepreneurship and Healthcare in Emerging Economies, co-taught by Sue Goldie. [http://ow.ly/TcA9b]


Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com) to get the latest updates on our research, news, teaching, and events!
Every year, the Commonwealth Fund invites promising mid-career professionals - government policy-makers, academic researchers, clinical leaders, hospital and insurance managers, and journalists - from Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, to spend up to 12 months in the US as a Harkness Fellow in Health Care Policy and Practice. HPM regularly hosts fellows, providing them a unique opportunity to work with faculty mentors to conduct a research study that addresses a critical issue on the health policy agenda in both the US and their home countries. This year we welcome Jacob West and Dionne Kringos!

Jacob's background is in public policy and health system leadership. From 2003 to 2010, Jacob worked at the UK Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. He advised two Prime Ministers on public policy in a range of areas including health, criminal justice, and education. Most recently he was Director of Strategy at King's College Hospital, where he led the takeover of a local hospital and helped establish a major integrated care program. Jacob’s research focus is on healthcare consolidation, looking at vertically integrated health systems in particular. He is working with Ashish Jha.

Dionne is a senior health services researcher from the Netherlands, where she worked at the Academic Medical Centre of the University of Amsterdam at the Department of Public Health. Her research focus is on health systems performance assessment, primary care, quality of care, and health policy analysis. She is dedicated to supporting evidence-based decision-making that contributes to health system sustainability and improvement.

Dionne's Harkness Fellowship aims to identify effective models of high quality primary care for patients with multiple chronic conditions or socioeconomic barriers to care. She will focus on best practices among US and international primary care practices, and experiences of an Academic Innovations Collaborative in Massachusetts where 20 Harvard-affiliated primary care practices are undergoing a transformation toward becoming a Primary Care Learning Laboratory for Patient Safety. She will study evidence-based interventions at policy, practice, provider and patient levels, and explore the drivers of transforming primary care practices toward becoming high performing practices for patients in complex circumstances, reducing the risk of harm. She is working with Sara Singer and Meredith Rosenthal.

**Student Spotlight: Katherine Heflin**

Katherine was drawn to public health and, more specifically, the HPM Department, because of her frustration with perceived “band-aid” solutions for large, systemic problems. Prior to enrolling in HSPH, she was working with domestic violence survivors in Washington D.C. and low-income individuals in the courts of the San Francisco Bay area on issues including credit card debt, eviction, and child custody. It was in these positions that she saw systemic problems that her organization attempted to address through short-term and problem-specific solutions. While these services were highly necessary and often solved the immediate problems at hand, she recognized that they were unable to address the underlying social and economic factors.

Katherine was drawn to HSPH’s HPM department because its comprehensive curriculum provides a strong understanding of the complexities of health policy and the skills for developing solutions. This experience also brought invaluable opportunities for mentorship; she noted that the HPM faculty with (continue on page 4)
Good Reads: HPM’s Fall Reading Recommendations

**Reducing Unnecessary C-Sections**

In one generation, the United States has seen a 500% increase in the number of cesarean-section deliveries. Originally designed as a life saving procedure, c-sections introduce greater health risks to babies and women, and place greater burden on the healthcare system. A new research project at Ariadne Labs is examining what is causing the dramatic rise.

Harvard assistant professor Dr. Neel Shah, an obstetrician-gynecologist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, leads the project. Dr. Shah’s study is testing a hypothesis that centers on operational management and workflow as decisive factors in the rates of discretionary c-sections.

**Pulse Program**

The purpose of the Ariadne Labs Pulse Program is to transform the way global health data is used to improve patient lives. Pulse builds on the foundation of the Ariadne Labs BetterBirth Program, a checklist-based quality improvement program to make childbirth safer in Uttar Pradesh, India facilities and also a trial to determine if the program saves lives. Pulse attempts to build a scalable approach to global health data utilization in the following 3 ways:

1) It establishes a robust and secure cloud-based architecture in partnership with Partners Healthcare and the Harvard School of Public Health. This environment will receive near real time feeds of data collected via mobile phone by field workers in Uttar Pradesh.
2) Rather than conduct periodic statistical analysis, the data in this environment will be used to gain daily insights into field-based operations via an operational reporting system. Reports will be tailored for specific stakeholders including government officials, program sponsors, and the Ariadne Labs BetterBirth team.

3) Finally, the data collected will be used to identify new opportunities for high-impact, scalable interventions. While potential solutions are not yet known, examples of potential opportunities include embedding a network of light-weight, low cost sensors in the field, such as hand-washing solutions capable of communicating use back to key stakeholders.

A Message from the Center for Health Decision Science

At the time this newsletter was going to press, multiple Center for Health Decision Science (CHDS) personnel were at the annual Society for Medical Decision Making meeting in Miami, where the research and expertise of CHDS was set to be widely visible. Newly appointed HPM/CHDS faculty member Ankur Pandya, Senior Research Scientist Eve Wittenberg, and Adjunct Faculty Members Myriam Hunink and Uwe Siebert were all teaching short courses: Ankur - Methods of Disease Model Calibration: Theory & Practice; Eve - Peer-to-Peer Mentoring for Faculty Success; Myriam - How-To Hands-On Workshop: Presentation Skills; Uwe - Introduction to Medical Decision Analysis (Decision-Analytic Modeling). In addition, Eve was one of the leaders for the symposium, The Art & Science of Preference Assessment: Applying State-Preference Methods Among Diverse Patient Groups, and Ankur was leading a teaching interest group and a ‘dinner with the experts and karaoke’ interest group. Four posters by CHDS researchers and students were presented: Ankur, Extracting Operating Characteristics That Are “Baked Into” Disease Association Measures; CHDS Programmer and Analyst, Zachary Ward, Resolving Structural Bias to Common Random Numbers When Simulating Events with Non-Ordered Outcomes; PhD Candidate Mark Shrime, Task-Sharing or Public Finance for the Expansion of Surgical Access in Rural Ethiopia: An Extended Cost-Effectiveness Analysis; Visiting Scholar Emily Burger, Screening High-Risk Med for Anal Carcinogenesis: Model Development and Policy Analysis. Moreover, both Emily’s and Mark’s posters were eligible for the Lee Lusted Student Prize!

(Continued from page 2) whom she has been able to interface – including John McDonough, Nancy Turnbull, and Nancy Kane – are exactly the type of practitioners from whom she would learn best. She is particularly grateful to have the opportunity to work with Dr. McDonough as a teaching assistant for his Fall 2 course.

In her time at HSPH, Katherine has also been able to work at several health disparity focused organizations. While in Boston, she worked at The Fenway Institute for a year and recently began working with the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. She also spent the summer in Washington, D.C. researching issues of health care access and coverage for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in ASPE’s Office of Health Policy. Through the connections in her HSPH networks, she has been able to immerse herself in relevant policy evaluation and implementation efforts at local, state, and federal levels.

Upon graduation, Katherine would like to continue to broaden her work experiences in either government or non-profit positions. She hopes to work in health policy that impacts disadvantaged populations, either specifically as it relates to LGBT and women, or through mitigating other social and economic disparities. While at HSPH, Katherine has become more comfortable with the uncertainties that come with a health policy career focused on disadvantaged populations. The superb coursework, mentorship, and advising she has received here has opened her mind to the possibilities of the many directions her career may take her.