

Final Grant Report for Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Title: Health Journalism 2010, national conference
on healthcare journalism

Principal Investigator: Leonard J. Bruzzese

Organization: Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism

Grant Period: 4/21/2010-8/20/2010

Federal Project Officer: Karen Migdail

Acknowledgement of Agency Support: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

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Abstract

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Reference: Grant No. 1R13HS019191-01
Grant Period: 4/21/2010 – 8/20/2010

Purpose: To improve the quality of news coverage of health and healthcare, the Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism held the training conference Health Journalism 2010 for reporters, editors, and producers on April 22-25.

Scope: About 500 people took part in a panels, workshops, and field trips aimed at improving journalists' knowledge of today's hot-button health issues. Links to speaker presentations, some audio and video of presentations, and articles about specific panels are available online.

Methods: The event included two general sessions, two workshops, 37 panel sessions, two day-long field trips, and three Newsmaker Briefings. Workshops provided tools for tracking healthcare costs and using data to depict local population health. Field trips put journalists through a mini-med school, allowed them to learn how a leading VA hospital was working with returning veterans and more. Panels featured 125 well-informed speakers.

Results: In post-conference evaluations, the average session review by surveyed attendees was 4.034 on a scale from 1-5. Key questions were as follows: "Did you get what you were hoping to from this conference?" (4.4) "How likely are you to use ideas or topics presented at the conference for future stories?" (4.4). Numerous stories were written during the conference, and attendees alerted us to dozens more launched immediately upon their return home.

Key Words: journalists, journalism, health, healthcare, professional development, media, medicine, communications

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Purpose

The Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism was born of the Association of Health Care Journalists' desire to create as a distinct home for educational and training projects. It is dedicated to improving public understanding of health and healthcare by promoting journalistic excellence. As part of that effort, the Center wishes to conduct Health Journalism 2010 in conjunction with the Association's annual conference.

The media play a key role in disseminating information and shaping public perceptions about healthcare, medical research, and public health policies. Yet, most reporters have no specific training for reporting on complex health matters. This may explain why news about health issues has often been criticized as superficial and unreliable. Healthcare journalists may have difficulty performing competently, because they are inadequately trained. By attending this conference, journalists can develop their skills and build a network of support among peers to help them do a better job informing the public about these critical issues.

Health Journalism 2010 seeks to:

- a) improve journalists' knowledge and skills in reporting, writing, and editing complicated health and healthcare stories;
- b) allow journalists to hear firsthand from some key policymakers and researchers;
- c) bring together healthcare journalists from various specialized and general interest news outlets to encourage cross-fertilization of ideas, skills, and knowledge about how to better report, write, and edit health stories.

AHCJ has a solid track record of staging well-run and highly successful conferences. Each year, we get more sophisticated in our approach to planning the conference program, and---possibly more important---evaluating the effectiveness of the conference. Based on attendee feedback, we adjust and enhance the conference format to become even more interactive and oriented to developing skills and increasing knowledge. For example, in 2008, we added a "Special workshop on mapping health" and a "Freelance PitchFest." In 2009, we added a workshop of four sessions on multimedia skills for journalists and "How-to Sunday," with a half-day lineup of how-to sessions.

Many sessions help journalists develop critical-thinking skills, which are very important for covering many complex healthcare issues. In short, these sessions are more experiential, involving hands-on exercises and demonstrations. Copies of the Health Journalism 2009 and Health Journalism 2008 conference programs are attached within the appendix as examples.

Our work with academic medical centers, other research institutes, and government agencies to find the best speakers on particular subjects (as well as to create a dialogue) has led to even more and clearer information reaching the public via print, broadcast, and online means.

The conference allowed opportunities to acquaint many journalists with healthcare comparative effectiveness research and data. We worked to extend the reach and impact of important research in the areas of effective healthcare and educate journalists about issues and problems in the delivery of health services and on summarizing research findings on improving quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness for healthcare. The 2010 conference fit the Agency's interest in supporting improvements in health outcomes, strengthening quality measurements, and improvement and identifying strategies to improve access, foster appropriate use, and reduce expenditures.

We featured more than 100 speakers and more than 40 panel sessions, workshops, classes, and field trips. Conference proceedings were posted on our website and presented in our newsletter, and they became part of our on-the-road training materials to reach more journalists.

Scope

On April 21-25, 2010, the Association of Health Care Journalists' Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism presented Health Journalism 2010, AHCJ's annual conference. The conference was held in Chicago, with an attendance of 504. Journalists from across the United States – plus Canada, England, and Hong Kong – heard from journalism and health experts during the 4-day event. Important benefits included story ideas, loads of resources, development of a professional network, and development of a more critical reporting eye.

The conference exposed journalists to a wide range of health-related topics and health experts. After a day of field trips to hospitals, research labs, and neighborhood-level clinics, the 41 panels and presentations included three news briefings for immediate reporting and panel sessions encompassing what's ahead in health reform, quality issues, long-term care, comparative effectiveness, aging, global health, insurance, using health data, and many other topics.

Press briefing or spotlight speakers this year included HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius; CDC Director Thomas Frieden; Jeffrey Shuren, Director of the FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health; and Peter J. Pronovost, of the Quality and Safety Research Group at Johns Hopkins.

Methods

To develop collaborations, we worked with public information officers from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, the National Library of Medicine, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and other public agencies. In addition, we collaborated closely with key people at the Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University; Northwestern Memorial Hospital; Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago; The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Chicago Tribune Foundation; McCormick Foundation; The Commonwealth Fund; Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation; and various other health-related not-for-profit groups.

We offered a forum for key health figures. In addition, we held three breaking-news press conferences during the conference. We introduced this aspect in 2005, and it has proven a highlight for attendees. It provides another incentive for newsroom managers to send reporters. At the 2006 conference, for example, the news conference unveiled AHRQ's web-based tool providing data on healthcare quality across all 50 states. In 2007, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger held a briefing on California's healthcare reform plans. In a 2008 news briefing, HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt announced the addition of patient satisfaction measures to the agency's Hospital Compare website, where the public can look up information about specific hospitals.

The Center greatly improved the knowledge and skills of journalists who attended the 2010 conference, so they are better informed and more adept at reporting on the many complicated health and healthcare topics. The conference encouraged healthcare journalists to support one another when possible in reporting and writing about these vital issues.

In addition, this conference raised the profile and stature of the beat. Raising the profile and stature helps attract the top journalists in the country to specialize in this beat and to stick with it. We are disseminating as much of the information as possible to other journalists by placing it on our website. We have incorporated conference handouts into a larger database archive that can be tapped on deadline.

The conference sessions, sources, and reporting guide handouts strengthen the knowledge and skills of journalists who disseminate information to the public. Instruction on how to pursue specific story ideas and health data will allow health reporters to

return to their communities and quickly produce important news stories that can lead to improved localized health activity.

Results

The proceedings from the conference sessions have been posted on our website, www.healthjournalism.org, an online gathering place for health reporters. Speaker presentations, audio and video of some presentations, and articles about specific panels are available on our website. Complete evaluation results available upon request.

Significance of the project’s accomplishments

The conference sessions, sources, and reporting guide handouts strengthened the knowledge and skills of journalists who disseminate information to the public. Instruction on how to pursue specific story ideas and health data allowed reporters to return to their communities and quickly produce important news stories that can lead to improved localized health activity.

Informing the work of healthcare journalists and giving them a base of support and a network increases the public’s access to accurate and helpful information and news about health and healthcare.

Post-grant plans

The Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalists continues to learn from planning and staging conferences to help us to continually improve the quality of our future conferences. Next year’s conference is already in the planning stages and will take place on April 14-17, 2011, in Philadelphia.

List of Publications and Products

Stories written about the conference or with information collected at the conference:

Story Title	Outlet	Author
In the States: Building Better Lifeboats	New America Foundation	Joanne Kenen
HHS expects resistance to parts of reform	ModernHealthcare.com	Joe Carlson and Rebecca Vesely
Health Reform: Sebelius brings us "the letter I"	New America Foundation	Joanne Kenen
HHS Secretary Sebelius Sees The Battle Raging On With Insurers	VisitBulgaria.info	Anna Tomova
Push is on to get health insurance extensions now for adult children under parents' policies	Medill Reports Chicago	Elizabeth Bahm
US says FL can't opt out of new federal health law and there's good reason why	Examiner.com	Steve Gara
Keep pushing; eventually something's got to give	PhillyBurbs.com	J.D. Mullane
Bloggers Continue to Unearth Reforms Unexpected	Kaiser Health News	Kate Steadman

Story Title	Outlet	Author
FDA Announces New Fusion Pump Safety Initiative	MedPage Today	Emily P. Walker
FDA Pushes for Safer Infusion Pumps	National Public Radio	Scott Hensley
FDA stepping up oversight of drug pumps	Huffington Post and AP	Mike Stobbe
Revisarán bombas para administrar fármacos tras 710 muertes	BuenaSalud.com	Ivan Oransky
No relief seen for Dallas' shortage of family docs	DallasNews.com (The Dallas Morning News)	Robert T. Garrett
Highest medical costs in TX? Lubbock, Tyler	DallasNews.com (The Dallas Morning News)	Robert T. Garrett
Siege mentality among hospital execs	DallasNews.com (The Dallas Morning News)	Robert T. Garrett
Fast Company honored for BPA coverage	PlasticsNews.com	Don Loepp
Bill to rein in problem nurses dies in committee	Redding.com	Ryan Sabalow David Rosenfeld and Diane Lund-
Hospitals Slow to Adopt Renowned Program	The Lund Report	Muzikant
Health Reform and the Physician Shortage	HealthLeaders Media	Phillip Miller
"We're all scared to death of healthcare reform"	Health Data Management	Greg Gillespie
Preventing infections: How Portland hospitals compare	OregonLive.com (The Oregonian)	Joe Rojas-Burke
Can dummies teach doctors better medicine?	CNN.com	Cate Vojdik Judith Graham, Trine Tsouderos and Deborah L. Shelton
Tracking hospital infections	Chicago Tribune	
At the next pharma love fest, spend some time with absolute risk	Reporting on Health	William Heisel
Tobacco continues to cripple and kill	Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder	Charles Hallman
The Checklist and Future Culture of Medicine	MedicalLessons.net	Elaine Schattner
Freelancing for health-related trade and professional publications	Oconee County Health Beat	Michael Posey
Missouri ranks low on policy, high on smoking rates, says CDC report (AUDIO)	MissouriNet	Jessica Machetta
HealthCare Reform: The Role of Nurses	OzarksFirst.com	
Medical students get lesson in safety	Providence Journal	Felice Freyer
CDC urges greater efforts to reduce smoking and save lives	The St. Louis American	Sandra Jordan Barbara Feder
Who's writing health articles for Demand Media, anyway?	Reporting on Health	Ostrov
10 things I learned at AHCJ 2010	Reporting on Health	William Heisel
Should Vioxx still be on the market?	Reporting on Health	William Heisel Barbara Feder
Health Reform: 10 New Ideas from Three Journalists	Reporting on Health	Ostrov

Story Title	Outlet	Author
Emergency Exorcism, Part 1: Medical journal editors need to do more about pharma ghostwriting	Reporting on Health	William Heisel
Emergency Exorcism Part 2: Five ways to bust pharma ghostwriting in medical, science journals	Reporting on Health	William Heisel
Health Reform: What's Ahead for State and Local Governments (and Journalists Who Cover Them)	Reporting on Health	Barbara Feder Ostrov
Un héroe hispano que sigue luchando	El Sentinel	Alsy Acevedo
Too much medicine? Part 1: High-tech births vs. nature's way	Minneapolis Star Tribune	Josephine Marcotty
Too much medicine? Part 2: Midwives are common, c-sections rare	Minneapolis Star Tribune	Josephine Marcotty
Texas, other states, should increase anti-smoking campaigns, CDC chief says	DallasNews.com (The Dallas Morning News)	Robert T. Garrett
Missouri, smoking deeply entwined; Compared with other states, the Show Me state is among the nation's most tobacco-friendly locales, according to Uncle Sam.	Kansas City Star	Alan Bavley
Sebelius expects more 'hand-to-hand combat'	WBEZ 91.5	Gabriel Spitzer
AHCJ Field Trip to Feinberg School of Medicine and Chicago Rehab Institute	KOLR TV Springfield, MO	Joy Robertson
HHS Secretary Sebelius sees more combat with insurers	Reuters	Debra Sherman
After 710 deaths, drug pumps under greater scrutiny	Reuters	
Health On The Hill - April 26, 2010	Kaiser Health News	Noam Levey
1115	The Health Show	
Saving the Littlest Lives	The Health Show	
Rural NPs Embrace Private Practice	American Journal of Nursing	Susan Presley
HHS chief continues to trumpet healthcare I-T	CincinnatiChildren'sBlog.org	Thomas McCormally
Chicago: My kind of town	Oconee County Health Beat	Michael Posey
HHS Secretary: Early things done well key to health reform's success	Kansas Health Institute News Service	Mike Shields
New CDC report measures Kansas tobacco control efforts	Kansas Health Institute News Service	Jim McLean
Latina healthcare concerns warrant deeper coverage	Latina Lista	Ada Alvarez
HEALTH REFORM: The chicken little hospitals	The New Health Dialogue (New America Foundation)	Joanne Kenen
Infusion pumps targeted for tighter FDA scrutiny	American Medical News	Kevin B. O'Reilly
Can a checklist save lives in American hospitals? One man in on a mission.	Medill Reports Chicago	Shannon Mehner and Elizabeth Bahm

Story Title	Outlet	Author
Experts: Life expectancy linked to location A 'tsunami' is in the forecast for America's aging population	Medill Reports Chicago	Shannon Mehner
The Accidental Wonk: Health Policy for Journalists More tobacco control efforts recommended at state, local level	Medill Reports Chicago	Elizabeth Bahm Barbara Feder Ostrov
Tobacco continues to cripple and kill HealthCare Reform: What will it mean for people of color?	Reporting on Health	
Hospital Infection Rates, A Deadly Problem	American Medical News Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder	Kevin B. O'Reilly
	Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder	Charles Hallman
	KSMU-Springfield	Chasity Mayes
	The Health Show - WAMC/Northeast Public Radio	
The Health Show: Week of May 16, 2010		



Speaker presentations, audio and video of some presentations and articles about specific panels are available. We expect to get additional materials in the coming days and those will be added as soon as they are available. More than 2,200 tweets from the conference are archived. For coverage and other news stories about the conference, please click here. Do you have a story to add to the list? Send it to pia@healthjournalism.org.



Keynote speaker

Peter Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., professor, Johns Hopkins University Quality and Safety Research Group, was this year's keynote speaker at the awards luncheon on Saturday, April 24. Pronovost, who established the Quality and Safety Research Group to advance the science of safety, is dedicated to improving health care through methods that are scientifically rigorous, but feasible at the bedside. Pronovost chose

patient safety as a career path after watching his father die as a result of a medical error. In his new book, "Safe Patients, Smart Hospitals: How One Doctor's Checklist Can Help Us Change Health Care from the Inside Out," Pronovost tells that story, as well as the story of his journey from a researcher to a leader in patient safety.

Newsmaker briefings

Back-to-back Newsmaker Briefings on April 22:

- Thomas Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at 5:30 p.m.
• Kathleen Sebelius, M.P.A., secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, at 6:15 p.m.



Newsmaker Briefing on Friday, April 23:

- Jeffrey Shuren, director, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, Food and Drug Administration



Assessing health reform

Special series of sessions to help you understand health reform:

- Assessing health reform: Does comparative effectiveness research work?
• Assessing health reform: Outlook for the nation's hospitals
• Assessing health reform: Is there a looming doctor shortage?
• Assessing health reform: What's ahead for state and local governments
• Assessing health reform: The reporting challenge going forward



- Conference home
Conference schedule
Registration
Hotel
Field Trips
Exhibit or Advertise
2010 Exhibitors
Fellowships

Congratulations to Betsy Cliff, a reporter at The (Bend, Ore.) Bulletin, who won complimentary registration to Health Journalism 2010 by filling out last year's conference evaluation.

• **The conference schedule**

More than 500 people joined us in the Windy City for a world-class program of panels, workshops, field trips and classes planned to improve journalists' knowledge of today's hot-button health issues. Attendees tell us they went home with story ideas, had the chance to meet sources, strengthened their reporting skills and attend breaking newsmaker events. There were plenty of opportunities to network with other journalists.

For those of you on Twitter, we used the hashtag [#ahcj2010](#) for news about and from the conference. Follow [AHCJ_Pia](#) for all of the latest news from AHCJ.

HOSTS

- [Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University](#)
- [Northwestern Memorial Hospital](#)
- [Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago](#)

ENDOWING SPONSOR

- [The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)

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- [The California Wellness Foundation](#)
- [Montefiore Medical Center](#)
- [California HealthCare Foundation](#)
- [Missouri Foundation for Health](#)
- [Northwest Health Foundation](#)
- [The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation](#)
- [The John A. Hartford Foundation](#)
- [Foundation for Informed Medical Decision Making](#)
- [RTI International](#)
- [Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center](#)
- [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)
- [The California Endowment](#)
- [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality](#)

Health Journalism 2010: Program

Thursday

8:30 a.m.-

4:30 p.m.

Field trips

Field trip 1 includes a mini-med school in a state-of-the art, hands-on simulation center at the Feinberg School of Medicine; a visit to the Renee Schine Crown Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Northwestern Memorial's Prentice Women's Hospital; a lunch discussion with leaders of the NUGene Project, a biobank of genetic samples and electronic health records from more than 10,000 volunteers; and a trip to the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago's world-renowned Center for Bionic Medicine.

Field trip 2 will feature a behind-the-scenes tour of its Mobile Examination Center for the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) with embargoed data about hypertension and diabetes. Attendees also will visit Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, one of the most active in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and learn about the approach to veterans recently returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Learn more about the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture's computer application that enables clinicians to enter, review and continuously update all information connected with any patient.

1-5 p.m.

Finding untold health story ideas in data and maps

1-
2:50
p.m.
3:10-
5
p.m.

Tools for tracking healthcare costs

Using data to depict the health of your local population

Catch two important back-to-back Newsmaker Briefings!

Thomas Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

5:30 p.m.

Kathleen Sebelius, M.P.A., secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

6:15 p.m.

7 p.m.

Welcome to Chicago reception

Friday

Starts at

7:30 a.m.

8 a.m.

Breakfast available

Newsmaker briefing

• Jeffrey Shuren, director, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, Food and Drug Administration

9:15-10:30

a.m.

Women's health research agenda: The coming decade

Monitoring the safety of the food supply

10:45 a.m.- noon	<p>Assessing health reform: Does comparative effectiveness research work? Incorporating social determinants into your local health coverage</p>
12:15-2 p.m.	<p>Preparing for the coming tsunami in aging How to read medical studies and avoid pitfalls in reporting on them Assessing health reform: Outlook for the nation's hospitals Pregnancy and childbirth trends: Issues of safety and choice</p>
2-2:45 p.m. 2:45-5:30 p.m.	<p>Luncheon session Influenza! Lessons learned from a year of H1N1</p>
	<p>Visit the exhibitors</p> <p>Freelance PitchFest Editors from magazines, newspapers, Web sites are coming to meet AHCJ's freelance members! This session has been created to give you an opportunity to sit down and discuss your ideas one-on-one with editors from selected publications. Bring your best ideas and be prepared to sell your work. You will be able to sign up for appointments online in advance and some appointment will be reserved for on-site registration.</p>
2:45-4 p.m.	<p>Participating editors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sara Austin, <i>Self Magazine</i> • David Corcoran, <i>The New York Times</i> • Daniel DeNoon, WebMD • Deborah Flapan, Medscape Medical News • Peggy Girshman, Kaiser Health News • Maureen "Shawn" Kennedy, M.A., R.N., <i>American Journal of Nursing</i> • Kathy LaTour, CURE Media Group • Meredith Matthews, <i>Current Health 1</i> and <i>Current Health 2</i> • Ivan Oransky, MD, Reuters Health • Colleen Paretty, WebMD Health • Julia Sommerfeld, senior editor, health, MSNBC.com • Matthew Weinstock, senior editor, <i>Hospitals & Health Networks</i>
4:15-5:30 p.m.	<p>Investigating nursing homes Spotting conflicts of interest in medical research Assessing health reform: Is there a looming doctor shortage? Meeting the needs of cancer survivors</p>
<p>Saturday Starts at 8 a.m.</p>	<p>The growing importance of palliative care Can reporters raise health literacy in the community? Tracking health-related stimulus money</p>

Breakfast available

	Freelancers! Look for the dining table marked Freelance Corner for a chance to network with other freelancers.
9-10:15 a.m.	Understanding health insurance What we can learn from "superagers" How many McAllens? Opportunities and pitfalls of spotlighting regional cost differences Addressing racial and ethnic disparities
10:30- 11:45 a.m.	Investigating hospital finances Guidelines for writing about preventive health guidelines Assessing health reform: What's ahead for state and local governments Patient safety advocacy: Mining for stories, resources and data
Noon-2 p.m.	Awards luncheon Peter Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., professor, Johns Hopkins University Quality and Safety Research Group, will be this year's keynote speaker.
2:15-3:30 p.m.	Assessing claims of functional foods and nutritional supplements Mounting physical and mental health needs of returning vets Impact of state budget cuts on health of the poor Contest winners: How they did it
3:45-5 p.m.	Reporting the science behind public health slogans Assessing health reform: The reporting challenge going forward Surviving and thriving as a freelancer
5:15-6:15 p.m.	Membership meeting
6:30 p.m.	Reception
Sunday	
Starts at 8 a.m.	Breakfast available
9-10:15 a.m.	Personal electronic medical records: What will consumers need to know? Using Cochrane Library resources
10:30 a.m.- noon	Complete reporter's guide to vaccines Getting the most out of PubMed and ClinicalTrials.gov Deciphering hospital quality data

Resources: Articles

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News from Health Journalism 2010 Date: 04/23/10



A set of newsmaker briefings as well as a stellar line-up of panels resulted in dozens of stories about the conference, infection prevention, patient safety, health reform, smoking, FDA activity and more.

Video from Health Journalism 2010

- [Presentation of the 2009 Awards](#) for Excellence in Health Care Journalism
- During a newsmaker briefing, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius discussed the [role of health journalists](#) in communicating about the H1N1 pandemic and health reform to the public.
- In a panel about "Guidelines for writing about preventive health guidelines," Len Lichtenfeld, M.D., M.A.C.P., deputy chief medical officer for the American Cancer Society, acknowledged the [difficulty of conveying changing guidelines](#).

Coverage from Health Journalism 2010

- [What the VA faces with Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom Vets](#)
- [Can reporters raise health literacy in the community?](#)
- [Hands-on experiences highlight AHCJ field trip](#)
- [What can we learn from superagers?](#)
- [Contaminated foods pose threat to public](#)
- [Experts acknowledge difficulty of writing about preventive health guidelines](#)
- [TBI, PTSD among war-related illnesses veterans face](#)
- [Untold stories remain in nursing homes](#)
- [Addressing racial and ethnic disparities](#)
- [High hopes, limited regulation a dangerous formula for 'functional foods'](#)
- [Looking for docs in all the wrong places?](#)
- [Caring for aging population will require healthcare transformation](#)
- [Sebelius predicts 'hand-to-hand combat' on health law](#)
- [What did the U.S. learn from the H1N1 pandemic?](#)
- [Experts: Where you live affects your health](#)
- [Journalists encounter obstacles in identifying conflicts of interest in medical research](#)
- [Session focuses tracking healthcare costs using the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care](#)
- [Photos from Field Trip 1, at the simulation center at Feinberg School of Medicine](#)

Stories, blog posts about Health Journalism 2010 and its events

- [Saving the littlest lives](#), The Health Show
- [Healthcare reform: What will it mean for people of color?](#), *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*
- [Tracking hospital infections: Some hospitals excel, others perform poorly in protecting patients from dangerous catheter problems, new numbers show](#); *Chicago Tribune*
- [Health Reform and the Physician Shortage](#), HealthLeaders Media
- [At the next pharma love fest, spend some time with absolute risk](#), ReportingOnHealth
- [The Bionic Woman](#), WAMC/Northeast Public Radio
- [Hospitals slow to adopt renowned program](#), The Lund Report
- [Hospital infection rates, a deadly problem](#), KSMU-FM
- [Writing about the complicated stuff: Milwaukee journalist impressed me](#), Oconee County Health Beat
- [Health journalists meet your competition](#), ReportingOnHealth.org
- [Study: Missouri is a tobacco-friendly state](#), *The Kansas City Star*
- [The Checklist and Future Culture of Medicine](#), Medical Lessons
- [Preventing infections: How Portland hospitals compare](#), *The Oregonian*
- [Will July 15 be a Dark Day for Telemedicine?](#), Health Data Management
- [Series on Dubious Autism Treatments Wins Journalism Award](#), SpectrumConnection.org

- [Functional Foods, Have your health](#)
- [\(You Can\) Build Your Own Website – & Get Wet!](#), Christine Cupaiuolo
- [A 'tsunami' is in the forecast for America's aging population](#), Medill Reports
- [Wrapping Up the Health Care Journalists' Meeting with Sebelius, Frieden, Pronovost, and Others](#), *American Journal of Nursing*
- [Scanning the Scrum at the Association of Health Care Journalists. News and Navel-Gazing Challenges for Journalists and Scientists Alike](#), by Kate Johnson
- [No relief seen for Dallas' shortage of family docs](#), *The Dallas Morning News*
- [Texas, other states, should increase anti-smoking campaigns, CDC chief says](#), *The Dallas Morning News*
- [HHS Secretary Sebelius sees more combat with insurers](#), Reuters
- [Push is on to get health insurance extensions now for adult children under parents' policies](#), Medill Reports
- [Sebelius Brings Us the "The Letter I,"](#) New America Foundation
- [FDA Pushes For Safer Infusion Pumps, Shots](#), NPR's Health Blog
- [After 710 deaths, drug pumps under greater scrutiny](#), Reuters Health
- [Food and Health at the Health Journalism Conference](#), Food Insight Blog
- [Sebelius Expects More 'Hand-to-Hand Combat'](#)
- [Transcript: Health On The Hill - April 26, 2010](#)
- [IN THE STATES: Building Better Lifeboats](#)
- [HHS expects resistance to parts of reform](#)
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- [FDA stepping up oversight of drug pumps](#)
- [FDA announces new effort to improve safety and design of drug pumps to reduce problems, deaths](#)
- [Revisarán bombas para administrar fármacos tras 710 muertes](#)
- [FDA Renew Focus On Infusion Pumps](#)
- [Highest medical costs in TX? Lubbock, Tyler](#)
- [Siege mentality among hospital execs](#)
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- [FDA wants safer infusion pumps](#)
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- [Bill to rein in problem nurses dies in committee](#)
- [Missouri ranks low on policy, high on smoking rates, says CDC report](#)
- [Healthcare Reform: The Role of Nurses](#)
- [CDC urges greater efforts to reduce smoking and save lives](#)
- [Rick Foster's Predictions](#)
- [Should Vioxx still be on the market?](#)
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- Health Reform: What's Ahead for State and Local Governments (and Journalists Who Cover Them)
- Assessing claims of functional foods and nutritional supplements
- Prevention model for bloodstream infections offers hope, but incidents persist

Speaker presentations

- Software suggestions for writers, from Maryn McKenna
- Presentation by Jeffrey Shuren, director, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, Food and Drug Administration, on infusion pumps.
 - Press release: FDA Launches Initiative to Reduce Infusion Pump Risks
 - FDA page on infusion pumps and FDA's new safety initiative
 - White Paper: Infusion Pump Improvement Initiative
 - Guidance for Industry and FDA Staff - Total Product Life Cycle: Infusion Pump - Premarket Notification [510(k)] Submissions
 - Letter to Infusion Pump Manufacturers
 - Public Meeting: Infusion Pump Workshop, May 25-26, 2010
 - Generic Infusion Pump Project



From the Association of Health Care Journalists newsletter *HealthBeat*, Summer 2010

Patient safety, reform, H1N1 top annual conference agenda

More than 500 attendees of Health Journalism 2010 took advantage of news-breaking speakers, experts on the impact of health reform, ideas on pursuing patient safety stories and more. The Association of Health Care Journalists' four-day annual conference in Chicago featured field trips, workshops, panels, roundtables and news briefings focusing on health reform, public health and medical device safety.

From day one, attendees filed stories from the conference.

In her news briefing on the conference's first day, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius predicted an "ongoing hand-to-hand combat" with health insurers over elements of the new sweeping healthcare legislation.

Sebelius said a challenge going forward in implementing the healthcare law – with some provisions going into effect in September but others not until 2014 – is countering the “misinformation” sowed by critics. The challenge, she said, “is to very quickly become the ‘help desk’ of America.”

She noted that soon after President Barack Obama signed the bill into law, some insurers claimed they had found a loophole allowing them to sidestep a provision beginning in 2010 that would prohibit denying children on the basis of preexisting conditions. Her department pushed back, Sebelius said, and “within 24 hours” talk of such a loophole evaporated.

Thomas Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, presented a report outlining the states’ progress in fighting smoking. The report said national smoking rates had leveled off after years of declines. Frieden urged states to step up funding of anti-smoking ads, sales tax on cigarettes and “help lines” for smokers who want to quit.

Utah and California have the lowest rates of adult smokers (9.3 percent and 14 percent), while West Virginia (26.5 percent) and Indiana (26 percent) have the highest, according to the report. Frieden also urged states to spend more of the money raised by cigarette taxes on prevention programs.

Jeffrey Shuren, M.D., head of the Food and Drug Administration’s devices center, announced the agency will make its regulation of infusion pumps stricter. He said the FDA will require design improvements, more thorough testing, and inspections of the makers’ facilities before the devices are approved.

“There have been problems with every kind of infusion pump on the market, across the entire industry,” Shuren said.

These devices are used by millions of people to deliver antibiotics for infections, chemotherapy for cancer, insulin for diabetes, and pain medication, among other drugs, Reuters Health reported. Of 56,000 reports of problems, there were 710 deaths.

A year of H1N1 stories brought together a panel of experts who scored government, media and private sector response to the flu pandemic that began in April 2009.

Getting consistent health messages out in the world of the 24-hour news cycle, blogs, social media and the Internet was one of the leading challenges facing public health officials as the H1N1 flu pandemic news unfolded, the panelists agreed.

Peter Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., in a keynote speech at the awards luncheon, encouraged journalists to investigate patient safety in hospitals. He chose patient safety as a career path after watching his father die as a result of a medical error. He tells that story, as well as the story of his journey from a researcher to an international leader in patient safety in his new book “Safe Patients, Smart Hospitals: How One Doctor’s Checklist Can Help Us Change Healthcare from the Inside Out.”

His efforts target improving healthcare through methods that are scientifically rigorous but feasible at the bedside. His current cause is to reduce catheter-related bloodstream infections in their local hospitals, saying the infections cause “31,000 needless deaths” in the United States each year.

With his landmark study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Pronovost was likely the first to implement a patient safety initiative successfully on a large scale. Using his system of checklist, culture change and measurement, he virtually eliminated the infection in Michigan and is taking his checklist national and international.

Journalists who signed up for conference field trips spent a day studying healthcare firsthand.

One group attended a mini-med school in a state-of-the art, hands-on simulation center at the Feinberg School of Medicine; made a visit to the Renee Schine Crown Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Northwestern Memorial's Prentice Women's Hospital; attended a discussion with leaders of the NUGene Project, a biobank of genetic samples and electronic health records from more than 10,000 volunteers; and took a trip to the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago's world-renowned Center for Bionic Medicine.

The other group visited the CDC's Mobile Examination Center for the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, obtaining embargoed data about hypertension and diabetes research. Attendees visited Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, one of the most active in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and learn about the approach to veterans recently returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The group also learned more about the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture's computer application that enables clinicians to enter, review and continuously update all information connected with any patient.

Other conference highlights:

A series of sessions covered finding detailed and authoritative sources of online databases and maps to build resources and skills. The sessions included public and private funding of healthcare as well as examining the health and health-related issues of communities and neighborhoods. Experts from Dartmouth Atlas and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation guided journalists through rich data sources directly related to health. A representative of ESRI introduced a Web interface that allows journalists to create neighborhood boundaries and examine health-related details.

A special track of panels throughout the conference were designed to help journalists assess health reform – the outlook for hospitals, doctor shortages, how local and state governments are affected, how public policies are made through comparative effectiveness research, and how journalist can keep up with health reform's twists and turns.

Freelancers and editors spent time meeting during AH CJ's annual PitchFest. The session was created to give freelancers an opportunity to sit down and discuss ideas one-on-one with editors from selected publications.