

The Commonwealth Fund: Building Blocks for Reform
Speaker Biographies
May 12, 2008

Sara Collins, Assistant Vice President

The Commonwealth Fund

Sara R. Collins is assistant vice president for the Program on the Future of Health Insurance at The Commonwealth Fund. She is an economist whose responsibilities include survey development, research and policy analysis, as well as program development and management for the Fund's health care coverage and access program. Prior to joining the Fund, Dr. Collins was associate director/senior research associate at the New York Academy of Medicine, Division of Health and Science Policy. Previously, she was an associate editor at U.S. News & World Report where she wrote articles on economics and health care. She was also a senior health policy analyst in the New York City Office of the Public Advocate. She holds an A.B. in economics from Washington University and a Ph.D. in economics from George Washington University.

Karen Davis, President

The Commonwealth Fund

Karen Davis is president of The Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation that aims to promote a high performing health care system that achieves better access, improved quality, and greater efficiency, particularly for society's most vulnerable, including low-income people, the uninsured, minority Americans, young children, and elderly adults.

Dr. Davis is a nationally recognized economist, with a distinguished career in public policy and research. Before joining the Fund, she served as chairman of the Department of Health Policy and Management at The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, where she also held an appointment as professor of economics. She served as deputy assistant secretary for health policy in the Department of Health and Human Services from 1977–1980, and was the first woman to head a U.S. Public Health Service agency.

Prior to her government career, Ms. Davis was a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., a visiting lecturer at Harvard University, and an assistant professor of economics at Rice University. A native of Oklahoma, she received her Ph.D. in economics from Rice University, which recognized her achievements with a Distinguished Alumna Award in 1991. Ms. Davis is the recipient of the 2000 Baxter-Allegiance Foundation Prize for Health Services Research. In the spring of 2001, Ms. Davis received an honorary doctorate in humane letters from John Hopkins University. In 2006, she was selected for the AcademyHealth Distinguished Investigator Award for significant and lasting contributions to the field of health services research in addition to the Picker Award for Excellence in the Advancement of Patient Centered Care.

Ms. Davis has published a number of significant books, monographs, and articles on health and social policy issues, including the landmark books Health Care Cost Containment, Medicare Policy, National Health Insurance: Benefits, Costs, and Consequences, and Health and the War on Poverty.

She serves on the Overseer's Committee to Visit the School of Public Health, Harvard University; the Board of Visitors of Columbia University, School of Nursing, and is on the Board of Directors of the Geisinger Health System. She was elected to the Institute of Medicine in 1975, has served two terms on the IOM governing Council (1986–90 and 1997–2000), and was a member of the IOM Committee on Redesigning Health Insurance Benefits, Payment and Performance Improvement Programs. She is a past president of the AcademyHealth (formerly AHSRHP) and an AcademyHealth distinguished fellow; a member of the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured and a former member of the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research (AHRQ) National Advisory Committee. She also serves on the Panel of Health Advisors for the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

Dallas Salisbury, President and CEO Employee Benefit Research Institute

Dallas Salisbury, President and CEO of the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), joined EBRI at its founding in Washington, DC in 1978.

The overall EBRI mission is “to contribute to, to encourage, and to enhance the development of sound employee benefit programs and sound public policy through objective research and education.” EBRI has earned widespread regard as an organization that “tells it like it is.” EBRI is supported financially by for-profit and non-profit corporations of all types, foundations, unions, government organizations, and international organizations seeking to better understand U.S economic security programs. The Institute does not lobby and does not advocate or oppose any policy position. The task of EBRI is to provide objective information regarding the employee benefit system and re-lated financial security issues, to achieve its primary goal, ‘that policy and design decisions be based on verifiable facts’. Researchers, policy makers and the media rely heavily on EBRI research. Dallas and his team regularly testify at Congressional and Commission hearings, and appear in print and broadcast media around the world. EBRI is the 14th most frequently cited “think-tank” in the nation using fair.org methods.

As a member of a number of commissions, Dallas assists study panels as well as editorial advisory boards. He is a Fellow of the National Academy of Human Resources and a member of the Board of the NAHR Foundation, the Commission on a High Performance Health System, the Board of Directors for FINRA Investor Education Foundation, and the Board of Advisors to the Comptroller General of the United States. He has served on the Secretary of Labor's ERISA Advisory Council, Presidential appointed PBGC Advisory Committee, Board of Directors of the Society for Human Resources

Management, U.S. Advisory Panel on Medicare Education, and the Board of Directors of the National Academy of Social Insurance.

He has been honored with the Award for Professional Excellence from the Society for Human Resource Management, the Plan Sponsor Lifetime Achievement Award and the Keystone Award of World at Work. Dallas was a delegate to the 1998, 2002 and 2006 National Summit's on Retirement Savings, and the 2005 White House Conference on Aging. Dallas accepted a 2007 National Emmy Award for Savingsman and the Choose to Save public education program.

Dallas has written and lectured extensively on economic security topics. His most recent books are: "Retirement Security in the United States: Current Sources, Future Prospects, and Likely Outcomes of Current Trends", "The Future of Retirement Income in America", "The Future of Social Insurance: Incremental Action or Fundamental Reform?", "IRA and 401(k) Investing" and "Managing Money in Retirement".

Prior to joining EBRI, Dallas held full-time positions with the Washington State Legislature, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Employee Benefits Security Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor, and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). He holds a B.A. degree in finance from the University of Washington and an M.A. in public administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

Cathy Schoen, Senior Vice President The Commonwealth Fund

Cathy Schoen is senior vice president at The Commonwealth Fund. She is a member of the Fund's executive management team and research director of the Fund's Commission on a High Performance Health System. Her work includes strategic oversight and management of surveys, research and policy initiatives to track health system performance. From 1998 through 2005, she directed the Fund's Task Force on the Future of Health Insurance. Prior to joining the Fund in 1995, Ms. Schoen taught health economics at the University of Massachusetts' School of Public Health and directed special projects at the UMASS Labor Relations and Research Center. During the 1980s, she directed the Service Employees International Union's research and policy department. In the late 1970s, she was on the staff of President Carter's national health insurance task force, where she oversaw analysis and policy development. Prior to federal service, she was a research fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. She has authored numerous publications on health policy issues, insurance, and national/international health system performance and co-authored the book, *Health and the War on Poverty*. She holds an undergraduate degree in economics from Smith College and a graduate degree in economics from Boston College.