



Milbank Memorial Fund

FELLOWS PROGRAM

2022–2023

Milbank
Memorial Fund 
Using evidence to improve population health.



DEAR COLLEAGUES:

Congratulations and welcome to the second cohort of the Milbank Fellows Program (MFP).

You and fellow members of this group represent senior leadership in executive branches and legislatures in 21 states, and reflect an extraordinarily diverse array of backgrounds, perspectives, and lived experience. We are very excited to engage with and learn alongside you, beginning with our first meeting in September. Founded in 1905, the Milbank Memorial Fund supports development of public sector leaders in achieving long-term, sustainable improvements in the health of all Americans. Our specific aims with MFP are to support you and your peers in:

- Gaining new knowledge about specific population health issues, interdisciplinary health and human services systems, and evidence-based approaches to improving population health;
- Expanding your personal insight and leadership capacities in support of defining and advancing a population health vision and agenda; and
- Creating meaningful connections with a network of colleagues, both from within the cohort and the broader Milbank State Leadership Network (MSLN).

Curriculum will be centered on **population health** (drivers of health, equity, and the role of government in population health) and **public sector leadership** (including adaptive leadership skills, public sector leadership skills and behaviors, and enabling effective cross-branch relationships).

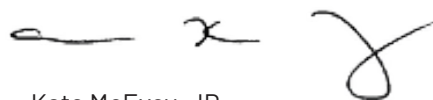
We will provide this support through our in-person and virtual Fellows meetings. You will also have access to a periodic newsletter, MSLN resource information, *Milbank Quarterly* publications, a Fellows connection event, and an option to request individualized technical assistance for yourself and your senior team on areas of interest.

A few practical notes:

- Meeting agendas and related information will be forwarded to you approximately a month before each meeting.
- Key contacts for the program include:
 - For all program inquiries: Kate (kmcevoy@milbank.org, 203-376-2328) and Karam Ahmad of the Colorado Health Institute (AhmadK@coloradohealthinstitute.org, 970-402-4891)
 - For all administrative support: Cindy Chen (cchen@milbank.org)
 - For travel support: Gail Cambridge (cambridge@milbank.org)
- Please see below for a refresher on the dates of the required in-person and monthly virtual Zoom meetings:
 - In-person meetings:
 - September 28–30, 2022, Nashville, Tennessee. Program begins on September 28 at 6:00 p.m. and ends on September 30 at 12:00 p.m.
 - December 5–7, 2022, Atlanta, Georgia. Program begins on December 5 at 6:00 p.m. and ends on December 7 at 12:00 p.m.
 - June 6–8, 2023, location TBD
 - Virtual Fellowship Seminars – 1-hour Zoom calls, centered on population health and leadership themes. (To be scheduled on specified Friday afternoons throughout the year.)
 - Optional Individual Fellow Calls and Technical Assistance – Fellows will have the option to engage with Milbank staff and program faculty for more incidental leadership support and thought partnership on population health topics.

Don't hesitate to reach out should you have any questions for us. Your leadership, talent, and insight are essential to improving population health and health equity. We can't wait to meet you in person in Nashville.

In partnership,



Kate McEvoy, JD
Program Officer
Milbank Memorial Fund

The Milbank Fellows Program is presented in partnership with the Colorado Health Institute.



FELLOW BIOGRAPHIES

Executive Branch Leadership

Jonette Arms, Assistant Administrator, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Jonette provides direct oversight of the Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health, Bureau of Community Health Promotion, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, and the Office of Policy Practice and Alignment. In addition, Jonette is responsible for directing, coordinating, planning, monitoring, and evaluating the operational activities of division of public health, which include financial oversight, strategic planning, and integration of health equity.



Heather Borski, Assistant Deputy Director of Community Health and Well-Being, Utah Department of Health and Human Services

Heather is currently overseeing the recent merger of Utah's Departments of Health and Human Services and is positioning health equity as a driving force in the agency's mission. Heather has worked for the Department of Health for more than 26 years and has held a variety of leadership positions within the organization.

Brooke Cunningham, Assistant Commissioner for Health Equity, Minnesota Department of Health

Brooke is the first ever assistant commissioner for health equity, reporting directly to the commissioner of health. She oversees and is expanding the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office, the Center for Health Equity, and the Office of American Indian Health. She aims to strengthen the agency's ability to advance health equity across all department initiatives and bureaus. Prior to joining the department of health, she was a general internist and sociologist working as a clinical investigator at the University of Minnesota Medical School.





Jatin Dave, Chief Medical Officer, MassHealth

In dual medical leadership roles, Jatin serves as the primary clinical liaison between MassHealth (Massachusetts Medicaid and CHIP) and Commonwealth Medicine, emphasizing the close working relationship between the organizations. As a chief medical officer, he provides medical, clinical, policy, and strategic oversight of all health care services for MassHealth members and represents the program on clinical matters. As the director of the Office of Clinical Affairs, he leads a team to provide clinical decision support to assure that the Medicaid program purchases and delivers the most clinically effective, high-quality, and cost-efficient healthcare to its members.

Debra Farrington, Deputy Secretary and Chief Health Equity Officer, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Service

In this newly created position, Debra focuses on addressing health disparities and the health needs of North Carolina's most vulnerable citizens.



Morissa Henn, Associate Commissioner, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

Morissa leads cross-cutting efforts across the state and department to integrate and improve services to help families and communities flourish. With direct oversight over three of the state's most complex systems serving vulnerable individuals – child welfare (Division for Children, Youth and Families), public mental health and substance misuse (Division of Behavioral Health), and psychiatric inpatient and residential care for children (Hampstead Hospital) – she is engaged in transformational efforts to ensure that people and populations have access to high-quality, community-oriented, and trauma-informed supports to build lives of meaning and well-being.

David Iseminger, Director, Employees and Retirees Benefits Division, Washington State Health Care Authority

Dave provides direction and support for long-term benefits strategy, benefit contracting efforts, and operations of Washington State's Public Employees Benefits Board Program and School Employees Benefits Board Program. Together, the two programs have annual expenses of about \$5 billion and cover over 700,000 Washingtonians who are employees and retirees (and their dependents) of school districts, state agencies, higher education institutions, and political subdivisions.





Monica Johnson, Director, Division of Behavioral Health, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Monica is responsible for leading a team of executive directors for the Offices of Adult Mental Health, Addictive Diseases, Children, Young Adults & Families, Deaf Services, Recovery, Prevention, Federal Grants and Culture Competency, and Statewide Field Operations & Crisis Coordination. She has over 25 years in the field and is a licensed professional counselor.

Tonya Joiner, Deputy Secretary, Louisiana Department of Health

Tonya is the new Deputy Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the state's largest agency with a budget of \$14 billion. She most recently served as chief of staff and under her leadership, the department implemented the first-ever health equity plan to ensure the department's services are equitably accessible to the residents of Louisiana.



Morgan Medlock Commissioner, Behavioral Health Administration, State of Colorado

Appointed by Governor Jared Polis, Morgan serves as a new member of the governor's cabinet. Morgan is a board-certified psychiatrist and addiction medicine specialist and is tasked with leading a holistic vision for the state's behavioral health system.

Breanca Merritt, Chief Equity and ADA Officer, Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA)

Breanca is the first FSSA Chief Health Equity and ADA Officer. In her role, she directs the agency's Office of Healthy Opportunities, which was established to address social drivers of health for the millions of individuals eligible for the agency's services. She is charged with implementing strategies to integrate equitable processes into program and policy design; pursuing community engagement strategies and co-design agency efforts with constituents and organizations; supporting equitable data collection, management, and analysis; and retaining a diverse and highly specialized workforce to support better outcomes for Indiana residents.





Cassandra Pasley, Chief of Staff, Florida Department of Health

Appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis, Cassandra oversees the daily operations for the department in the overall planning, direction, administration, and evaluation by interacting and engaging closely with employees, governmental agencies, and the public to identify issues and provide valuable solutions. She is indirectly responsible for more than 13,000 employees in the department, which includes the 67 local county health departments and a nearly \$3 billion budget.

Matt Yancey, Deputy Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

As top advisor to Commissioner Marie Williams, Matt provides vision and oversight to all Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services community-based programs, including prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery support.



Legislators



Ralph Alvarado, State Senator, Kentucky (R)

Ralph was elected to the Kentucky State Senate in 2014 and is the first Hispanic member ever elected to the Kentucky General Assembly. He represents Kentucky's 28th Senate district, which includes Fayette, Clark, and Montgomery counties. Ralph serves as the chair of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee and on the Medicare Oversight Committee, Senate Banking and Insurance Committee, and Senate State and Local Government Committee.



Fred Baldwin, State Senator, Wyoming (R)

Fred has served in the Wyoming State Senate since 2017, representing District 14. He chairs the Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee and the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Committee. Fred is a practicing physician assistant and volunteer firefighter.

Sara Gelser Blouin, State Senator, Oregon (D)

Sara has served in the Oregon legislature since 2005 and currently chairs the Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery. She entered public service through the disability community and is an advocate for full inclusion of people with disabilities in education, the workforce, housing, and community. In 2009, she was appointed by President Barack Obama to the National Council on Disability and in 2011 participated in the German Marshall Memorial Fellowship. Sara successfully spearheaded efforts to strengthen Oregon's child welfare system, strictly limit the use of seclusion and restraint in schools and kids' residential programs, and bolster Oregon's health care nondiscrimination laws to overturn problematic crisis standards of care.



Laura Fine, State Senator, Illinois (D)

Laura is a state senator of the 9th district, which encompasses Chicago's Northern suburbs. She serves as the chair of the Behavioral and Mental Health Committee and is a member of the Appropriation-Human Services, Environment and Conservation, Health Access and Availability, and Insurance committees. Prior to serving in the Senate, Laura served as the state representative for the 17th district for six years. Her legislative focus has been on consumer protection, expanding mental health services and insurance coverage, protecting the environment, and advocating for young adults and the disabled community.

Mark Lawson, State Representative Oklahoma (R)

Mark has served in the Oklahoma State House of Representatives since 2016. Currently, Mark serves as chairman for the Appropriations and Budget subcommittee for Human Services, which oversees 10% of the entire state budget. Additionally, he serves on the full Appropriations and Budget Committee and the standing committees on Government Efficiency and Children, Youth and Family Services.





Mark Pearson, State Representative, New Hampshire (R)

In 2012, Mark was elected to the New Hampshire House of Representatives, where he serves as the chair of the Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee. Outside of the state legislature, Mark serves as the CEO of a wholistic medical center that brings together family practice medicine, counseling, massage, and patient and community education together.

Marcus Riccelli, State Representative, Washington (D)

Marcus was elected to the state legislature in 2012, and serves on the Health Care and Wellness Committee, which he vice-chaired for three years, as well as on the Capital Budget, Transportation, and Rules committees, and has served in the leadership role of Majority Whip since 2016. Outside his duties with the legislature, Marcus is the community relations manager for a federally qualified health clinic that serves over 100,000 patients at 18 sites.



Dylan Roberts, State Representative, Colorado (D)

Dylan represents District 26 in the Colorado House of Representatives, which encompasses Eagle and Routt Counties. Serving in this position since 2018, his work at the legislature has focused on lowering the cost of health care and prescription drugs, protecting our environment and water, finding ways to lower the cost of living, and promoting rural economic development. He serves as the chair of the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee and as a member of the House Judiciary Committee and the House Agriculture, Livestock and Water Committee.

Ed Stafman, State Representative, Montana (D)

Ed has served in the Montana House of Representatives since 2021 and is the chair of the Children, Families, Health & Human Services Interim Committee, where he is working to build a consensus to address Montana's mental health crisis and to create greater access to, and better quality, mental health care for Montanans, especially children. For 25 years, Ed was a trial lawyer focused on civil rights and death penalty cases and also served as an ordained rabbi.



STAFF



Christopher Koller, President, Milbank Memorial Fund

Christopher leads the Milbank Memorial Fund, a more than 100-year-old foundation that aims to improve population health and health equity. Before joining the Fund, he served the State of Rhode Island as the country's first health insurance commissioner, an appointment he held between 2005 and 2013. Under Christopher's leadership, the Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner was nationally recognized for its rate review process and its efforts to use insurance regulation to promote payment reform, primary care revitalization, and delivery system transformation.

Kate McEvoy, Program Officer, Milbank Memorial Fund

Kate leads the Milbank Memorial Fund's state leadership programs and network and guides the Fund's healthy aging work. Kate was previously director of health services in the Connecticut Department of Social Services, where she oversaw care delivery and payment reform work in Medicaid, CHIP, and long-term services and supports.



She is a former president and vice president of the National Association of Medicaid Directors Board of Directors and served on the steering committee of the Reforming States Group, the predecessor to the Milbank State Leadership Network. She also contributed to state health reform initiatives as assistant comptroller for the State of Connecticut. An elder law attorney by training, Kate spent her early career working for a regional Agency on Aging and as a legislative liaison for the Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging.



Cindy Chen, Program Associate, Milbank Memorial Fund

Cindy is responsible for project managing all logistics of the two leadership programs, supporting program officers, and is the Salesforce Administrator. Prior to joining the Fund, she was the program assistant at the J.C. Flowers Foundation, where she focused on grants and data management and assisted with programming. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration, majoring in finance, from the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College.



Gretchen Hammer, Founder, Public Leadership Group

Gretchen has served as a public leadership consultant, nonprofit executive, and senior government official focused on improving the health and well-being of Colorado communities for the past two decades. She served for nearly four years as the Medicaid director at the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing. In 2018, she launched the Public Leadership Consulting Group, where she works with all sectors of civic life, supporting the public, private, and philanthropic sectors to increase their impact, leadership, and efficiency.

Karam Ahmad, Senior Policy Analyst

Karam is experienced in translating complicated data, policies, and analyses for a variety of audiences and stakeholders. A native of Colorado, he has a passion for connecting the dots locally, with data and community input and an upstream focus on social factors that influence our health.



ABOUT THE MILBANK MEMORIAL FUND

The Milbank Memorial Fund is an endowed operating foundation that works to improve population health and health equity by collaborating with leaders and decision-makers and connecting them with experience and sound evidence.

We advance our mission by:

- Identifying, informing, and inspiring current and future state health policy leaders to enhance their effectiveness
- Working with state health policy decision makers to advance primary care transformation, sustainable health care costs, and healthy aging
- Publishing high-quality, evidence-based publications and *The Milbank Quarterly*, a peer-reviewed journal of population health and health policy

OUR LEGACY AND EQUITY COMMITMENTS

Amidst the national reckoning on race and inequality in 2020, Milbank Memorial Fund staff began a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion review that involved an examination of the Fund's history, including its involvement in the US Public Health Service Study of Untreated Syphilis at Tuskegee and Macon County, Alabama.

The following year, [the Fund apologized](#) to the leadership of the Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Organization (VFOFLF), a non-profit formed by descendants of study victims. In 2022, the Fund released a [report by historian Susan Reverby](#) on its involvement in the study and subsequent silence; published a [racial equity statement of purpose](#) in which it committed to leadership, internal culture, and programming reforms; and revised its mission, vision, and values statement to include health equity. The Fund and VFOFLF have signed a partnership agreement, and the Fund has made a monetary contribution to VFOFLF to help the descendants' organization achieve its strategic goals.

In June 2022, the Fund held an historic apology ceremony with board members, staff, and descendants at Tuskegee University. The Fund is currently collaborating with the VFOFLF to share its story of harms and healing in hopes of inspiring other intuitions to address their own legacies and address racism in health care. The Fund is also currently applying a racial equity lens to its programmatic work and diversifying its authorship.



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