

**NCL *Ensuring Consumer Access to Healthcare* Conference  
National Press Club  
November 16, 2016**

Born out of collaboration with the members of the National Consumers League's (NCL) Health Advisory Council, NCL's *Ensuring Consumer Access to Healthcare* Conference brought together patient and consumer advocates, healthcare professional organizations, pharmaceutical and healthcare industry representatives, health plans, and government officials for an engaging discussion of the impact of the election and healthcare access problems facing consumers and ideas for solutions. Conference attendees particularly appreciated the diversity of the audience and speakers and the thought-provoking examination of the current health policy landscape. The conference agenda is available [here](#) and a summary of the discussion appears below.

**Welcome and Overview**

**Sally Greenberg, NCL Executive Director**, welcomed the attendees and referenced NCL's long history of advocating for quality, affordable healthcare. In 2017, NCL will work with its colleagues in the consumer and health advocacy communities to support the important gains of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and other policies that will improve the public health.

**Panel 1: The 2016 Election: The Implications for Healthcare Access**

**Moderator:** Janay Johnson, Health Policy Associate, National Consumers League

**Panelists**

- Joel White, President, Council for Affordable Health Coverage
- Leslie Frane, Executive Vice President, Service Employees International Union
- David Merritt, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs & Strategic Initiatives, America's Health Insurance Plans
- Theresa Chalhoub, Health Policy Counsel, National Partnership for Women & Families
- Jenny Bryant, Senior Vice President for Policy & Research, PhRMA

The panel explored the election's likely implications for healthcare access. Panelists ranked the chances of survival of certain ACA provisions from high (such as under 26 coverage, pre-existing conditions provisions, and premium subsidies in some form) to low (such as individual and employer mandates). Panelists discussed plans to defend the critical gains achieved under the ACA, and the importance of replacing the ACA – not simply repealing it – to ensure that millions of individuals do not lose health insurance coverage.

The panelists stressed that Democrats and Republicans must come together to put forth solutions that will ensure a stable risk pool in the individual market, a robust employer pool, and a strong public health safety net. In addition, policies need to address healthcare costs in order to ensure access to high quality, affordable care.

### **Panel 2: The Move towards Value-Based Healthcare to Improve Patients' Access to Care**

**Moderator:** Ellie Dehoney, Vice President, Policy and Advocacy, Research!America

#### **Panelists**

- Michele Oshman, Senior Director, Advocacy and Alliance Development, Eli Lilly
- Lydia Mitts, Senior Policy Analyst, Families USA
- Shari Erickson, Vice President, Governmental Affairs and Medical Practice, American College of Physicians
- Lisa Gill, Editor, Best Buy Drugs Program, *Consumer Reports*

Ellie Dehoney, Vice President, Policy and Advocacy, Research!America, moderated the panel on value-based healthcare, noting that we need affordable coverage that works. Panelists discussed the importance of the patient voice in value discussions; supporting and incentivizing healthcare providers to deliver better quality and better coordinated care; improving use of clinical evidence in care decision-making; and greater adoption of value-based contracting and value-based insurance design. *Consumer Reports'* Best Buy Drugs Program shared tips for saving money on drugs, including shopping around, asking for a generic version, asking for the lowest possible price at the pharmacy, and removing gag orders on pharmacists.

### **Panel 3: Improving Access to Care for the Underserved and Minority Populations**

**Moderator:** Regina Benjamin, M.D., 18th U.S. Surgeon General

#### **Panelists**

- Dan Hawkins, Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Research, National Association of Community Health Centers
- Elena Rios, President and CEO, National Hispanic Medical Association
- Stacie Maass, Senior Vice President, Pharmacy Practice and Government Affairs, American Pharmacists Association
- Leslie Parks, Senior Director of Programs & Advocacy, Black Women's Health Imperative

**Dr. Regina Benjamin, 18th U.S. Surgeon General and the Founder and CEO of BayouClinic, a rural health clinic in Alabama,** led the discussion of ways to improve access to care for underserved and minority populations. The panelists discussed the need for improved federal policies to address health disparities affecting African-

Americans, Hispanics, and other minority groups. In addition to recognizing the important role of Community Health Centers in providing primary and preventive care services to over 25 million people, Dr. Benjamin praised the Patient-Centered Medical Home model, and urged patients to ask for team-based care. Pharmacists are uniquely situated to increase access to care, since 86% of Americans live within 5 miles of a pharmacy. Strategies to improve healthcare access for underserved populations include using patient navigators; designing disease prevention programs with members of the community; increasing the diversity of the healthcare workforce; and continuing the progress of the ACA.

### **Closing Remarks**

**Karin Bolte, NCL's Health Policy Director**, thanked everyone and stated NCL's commitment to continuing to work collaboratively to improve access to quality, affordable healthcare.