



Kara Carter, MBA, MSc

Senior Vice President, Strategy and Programs

Kara Carter is senior vice president of strategy and programs at the California Health Care Foundation, where she leads strategic and operational activities. In this role, she develops strategies, provides overall guidance, and leads the program teams in the development, execution, and assessment of specific plans to achieve CHCF's goals.

Prior to joining CHCF, Kara was a partner at McKinsey & Company's San Francisco office, where she helped public sector health and social service systems in the UK, the US, and globally to improve quality of care while ensuring affordability and broad access. She has worked with payers, providers, government agencies, and physician organizations to design value-based payment programs, new care-delivery models, and a broad range of innovative interventions aimed at improving health and care for low-income individuals and families. Before joining McKinsey, Kara worked for UK-based philanthropic institutions on a broad range of topics related to poverty and community action. Kara received a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia, a master's in social anthropology from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a master's in business administration from the London Business School.



Christopher Perrone, MPP

Director, Improving Access

Christopher Perrone is director of CHCF's Improving Access team, which works to improve access to coverage and care for low-income Californians. Chris was previously director of the foundation's Health Reform and Public Programs initiative, where he led efforts to improve the policies and practices that shape Medi-Cal and other publicly funded health care programs, and to promote greater transparency and accountability within these programs.

Prior to joining CHCF, Chris served as director of planning for the Massachusetts Division of Medical Assistance. He was the first external recipient of the Globe Award, given by the Office of Strategic Planning at HCFA (now CMS), for his work to improve the delivery and financing of acute and long-term care services for low-income seniors. He has also held positions with The Lewin Group, the American Psychological Association, and the Center for Health Policy Studies at Georgetown University. Chris received a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University.



Katherine Rodriguez, MPP

Associate Director, State Health Policy

Katie Rodriguez is the associate director for State Health Policy in the foundation's Sacramento office, which provides a local resource for legislative staff, policymakers, and the media and serves as a liaison to experts and resources at the foundation's Oakland headquarters.

Katie helps support the work of policymakers and state agencies and departments through research and analysis, technical support, and policy briefings. She also assists in convening stakeholders, foundation partners, and grantees to advance the foundation's mission. Prior to joining CHCF, Katie was the senior policy advisor for Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan. She assisted the county in positioning itself for the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Previously, she served as the senior legislative assistant for health policy to a member of Congress during the passage of the ACA. Katie earned a bachelor's degree in government from the College of William & Mary and a master's degree in public policy from the University of Michigan Ford School of Public Policy. As part of her graduate studies, she served as an intern with the White House Domestic Policy Council Health Office.



Kristof Stremikis, MPP, MPH

Director, Market Analysis and Insight

Kristof Stremikis is director of CHCF's Market Analysis and Insight team, which promotes greater transparency and accountability in California's health care system.

He oversees the foundation's work to provide research and analysis to policymakers and other health leaders across the state to give a market-wide view of the complex health care ecosystem and to support informed decisions about California's health care landscape. Previously, Kristof served as associate director for policy at the Pacific Business Group on Health, where he also oversaw the Purchaser Value Network. Prior to that, he spent six years at the Commonwealth Fund as senior researcher to the president. Kristof received a bachelor's degree in economics, political science, and history from the University of Wisconsin, Madison; a master's of public policy from the University of California, Berkeley; and a master's of health policy and management from Columbia University.



Melissa Buckley, MPP

Director, Innovation Fund

Melissa Buckley is director of the CHCF Health Innovation Fund, which invests in technology and service companies with the potential to significantly lower the cost of care or improve access to care for low-income Californians.

Melissa leads the foundation's efforts to bring health care payers and providers together with entrepreneurs and investors in order to solve important problems in the safety-net delivery system. Melissa is responsible for sourcing and executing investments that are aligned with CHCF's mission, and supporting investees by leveraging CHCF's knowledge of and relationships with networks of providers, payers, and policymakers, as well as CHCF's expertise in policy, finance, and reimbursement. Before joining CHCF, Melissa worked as a strategy consultant for health care companies and nonprofits, investment firms, and foundations. She worked as a consultant at McKinsey & Co. in New Jersey and San Francisco and in health care investment banking at J.P. Morgan in New York. Melissa serves on the advisory board of Stanford University's Haas Center for Public Service. She received a bachelor's degree in human biology from Stanford University and a master's in public policy from Harvard University.



Catherine Teare, MPP

Associate Director, High-Value Care

Catherine Teare is associate director of CHCF's High-Value Care team, which supports policies and care models that align with patient preferences, are proven effective, and are affordable. She leads the foundation's work on behavioral health care, including behavioral health integration in primary care and behavioral health interventions for high-cost populations. She also manages projects related to the county role in health care delivery and oral health care.

Catherine has worked at CHCF since 2011 and previously led the organization's efforts on enrollment in public programs, with a particular focus on consumer experience. Before joining the foundation, she worked as a consultant for safety-net health care providers, foundations, and local government, providing research and policy analysis in the areas of health care financing and delivery, public and private health insurance programs for children, adolescent health, reproductive health, HIV, and youth development. She also worked as director of policy for Children Now and as a health policy analyst for the National Center for Youth Law. She received a bachelor's degree in English from Yale College and a master's degree in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley.



Sandra Shewry, MPH, MSW

Vice President, External Engagement

Sandra Shewry is vice president for External Engagement, where she leads CHCF's health policy communications, digital publishing, government relations, and audience engagement functions. The External Engagement team works with colleagues across the foundation to deepen partnerships and collaborations in support of CHCF's vision and goals. Sandra previously served as CHCF's director of State Health Policy.

Prior to joining the foundation, she was president and CEO of the Center for Connected Health Policy, a nonprofit organization working to remove policy barriers to the integration of telehealth technologies into California's health care system. Sandra held a number of senior leadership positions within California state government, including director of the California Department of Health Care Services, which administers the state Medicaid program (Medi-Cal). Other programs under her leadership included public health, emergency preparedness, and licensing of health facilities. She also served as the executive director of the California Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board. Sandra received bachelor's degrees in community studies and psychology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and master's degrees in public health and social welfare from the University of California, Berkeley.