



**Reducing the Rx Burden:  
Pathways to Lower Drug Prices and Increase Access**

December 11, 2024

**SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

(In order of appearance on the program)

**Caitlin (Cait) Ellis, MPA**, is the Vice President and Senior Director of Research Programs at the National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM) Foundation, where she provides strategic leadership in the development and execution of the Foundation's programming initiatives.

In this role, Ms. Ellis directs NIHCM's Research Grant program, which funds investigator-initiated research to inform improvements to the US health care system, and advises on NIHCM's Journalism Grant program. She leads and advises on NIHCM's Awards program, working with independent judges panels to recognize excellence in published research and journalism. Ms. Ellis oversees NIHCM's Research Briefs and Infographics programs, which synthesize, translate, and visualize research and evidence for diverse audiences. Additionally, Ms. Ellis leads NIHCM's monthly Newsletter and oversees the organization's Webinar program, fostering expert dialogue on health care management and public health topics.

Since joining NIHCM in 2014, Ms. Ellis has held multiple roles within the organization. She holds a Master of Public Affairs with a concentration in Policy Analysis from the Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University Bloomington, and a BA in Politics from Willamette University. Prior to her tenure at NIHCM, Ms. Ellis gained valuable experience through political and non-profit fellowship positions.

**Avik Roy** is the President and CEO of NIHCM LLC and NIHCM Foundation. He works with health plan CEOs and policy experts to advance strategic thinking and practical applications. The NIHCM health plan CEOs have a combined revenue of almost \$400 billion and insure more than 40 percent of commercially insured Americans. Mr. Roy also spearheads the Foundation's work to improve the health of all Americans through a robust array of programs, grants, and awards. Mr.

Roy also serves as President of the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity ([FREOPP.org](http://FREOPP.org)), a non-partisan, non-profit think tank he co-founded in 2016; and as the Policy Editor at Forbes.

National Review has called Roy one of the nation's "sharpest policy minds," while The New York Times' Paul Krugman described him as a man of "personal and moral courage." Roy's writing has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, the Washington Post, the Atlantic, and elsewhere; and he has appeared on CBS, NBC, PBS, CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News, among other places.

He serves on the advisory boards of several organizations, including the Bipartisan Policy Center and the National Academy of Medicine's RWJF Health Policy Fellowship; and is an Aspen Institute Health Innovators Fellow.

**Gregg Girvan, MPP**, is a Resident Fellow at FREOPP. Gregg grew up in West Palm Beach, Florida, and attended the University of Florida, where he became the sports editor of the [Independent Florida Alligator](#) while double-majoring in political science and microbiology. He also covered University of Florida sports for the *Tampa Tribune* and the *Palm Beach Post*. "Despite being a UF student, my experience covering the Gators taught me the importance of putting my fandom aside and to report the facts without bias. It's a lesson I have carried with me through my policy career, although — let's face it — I've since allowed myself to bleed orange and blue again!"

After serving a mission in Berlin for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Gregg began his transition into think tankery by obtaining a Master's degree in public policy from Brigham Young University. He went on to serve in a number of health care policy roles at the Utah Office of Consumer Health Services, the Heritage Foundation, the Congressional Research Service, Booz Allen Hamilton, the Utah Office of Legislative Research & General Counsel, and the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission.

It was in these roles that Gregg reveled in his ability to delve into the unglamorous details of public policy work. For example, at his last stop before FREOPP, Gregg helped Texas save \$465,000 a year by reducing wasteful spending in the state's motorcycle safety program. Gregg's relationship to FREOPP's mission is personal, because his family is no stranger to medical and financial difficulties. At one point, his children had to enroll in Medicaid, and the family often found it difficult to obtain the care they needed. "We had one provider in particular that dropped our Medicaid coverage without warning, which resulted in a disruption of care for our children when they needed it most. With Medicaid, you're thinking you have coverage that's 'free,' but nothing is free. There are always trade-offs."

But the experience also highlighted for Gregg the importance and value in helping every American find affordable, high-quality health insurance. "Most of us can agree that health coverage for every American is a good thing. The real question is how we get there. Do we default to a one-size-fits-all system with little to no choice, or do we deliver universal coverage by

harnessing personalized options and innovation and competition? I believe the latter gives us the best chance of success that's sustainable — not just for my generation, but for my children's generation and beyond.”

Gregg, who taught himself the R programming language, is FREOPP's designated quant guy, the one who we most lean on for data-heavy research. “For the longest time, I felt alone in my view that we could achieve universal coverage and affordable health care through free markets. At FREOPP, I've found my home. And I'm proud that the research we produce here will help us achieve these goals.”

Gregg and Ashley live in the Austin suburbs with their three children, all of whom also bleed orange and blue.

**S. Sean Tu, JD, PhD**, is a nationally recognized expert on patent law and drug law and Professor of Law at West Virginia University College of Law. He holds degrees in chemistry and microbiology from the University of Florida and a JD from the University of Chicago, where he was a research assistant for Judge Richard Posner. Dr. Tu received his doctorate in pharmacology from Cornell University and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology. He is affiliated with Harvard Medical School's Program On Regulation, Therapeutics, And Law (PORTAL) and a scholar at Georgetown's O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law.

**Mary Beth Erwin, MPH** is the Chief Pharmacy Officer at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. Her areas of responsibility include the strategic direction of the pharmacy program, administration of all aspects of the Commercial and Medicare Part D pharmacy benefit, Pharmacy Benefit Manager oversight and contract management, and operational programs.

Mary Beth began her career at BCBSMA in 2004 and has held several positions within the Pharmacy team including clinical reviewer and Director of Pharmacy Operations where she oversaw the Pharmacy prior authorization team and the Medicare Advantage Part D formulary and operational programs.

Mary Beth received her BS in Pharmacy at the University of Connecticut and her Master's in Public Health Practice from the University of Massachusetts- Amherst. She holds pharmacist licensure in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Prior to coming to BCBSMA, she worked as a retail pharmacist as well as a clinical pharmacist in the long-term care and home infusion settings. She lives in Attleboro, MA with her husband and three girls.