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ARTHUR E. HESS
1965 – 1967

Arthur E. Hess, a deputy commissioner of the Social Security Administration, was named as first director of the Bureau of Health Insurance in 1965, placing him as the first executive in charge of the Medicare program. At the time, the program provided health insurance to 19 million Americans.

Called “Mr. Medicare,” he was praised for bringing together private insurers, hospitals and government agencies to make the program successful, according to news reports at the time. In 1967, he was promoted to the position of deputy commissioner of the Social Security Administration and served as acting commissioner for several months in 1973. He retired in 1974. In 1967, he was awarded the President’s Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service, the highest award bestowed on federal career employees.

Hess graduated from Princeton University in 1939 and received a law degree from the University of Maryland in 1948. Shortly after graduating from Princeton, he took his first government job as a field representative for the Social Security Administration.

Hess passed away in November 2005.
**THOMAS M. TIERNEY**

**1967 – 1977**

Thomas M. Tierney was a highly decorated World War II fighter pilot who went on to head the Medicare system under four presidents. In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson tapped him to head the administration’s new Medicare program for the elderly and disabled, which was then based at the Social Security Administration. Tierney held the post for the next 11 years, before becoming a regional commissioner for the Social Security Administration and, eventually, a health claims arbitrator for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Tierney graduated from the University of Notre Dame, he entered the Army Air Forces in 1942, flying combat missions over Europe for the next three years with the celebrated 9th Air Force.

On one mission, his plane was badly damaged by enemy fire. But Mr. Tierney managed to limp back to England, where he crash-landed at an airfield when one of his wings disintegrated. For that he received the Purple Heart — one of many medals he amassed during the war. Among others were the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 13 oak-leaf clusters and the French Croix de Guerre.

Discharged as a lieutenant colonel, he received his law degree from the University of Denver and served as president of Colorado Blue Cross from 1957 to 1967.

ROBERT A. DERZON

Robert A. Derzon was the first administrator of HCFA, which was the first federal agency to manage Medicare and Medicaid. HCFA was created in March 1977 to coordinate the two programs, which had been run separately since their creation in 1965.

He also was senior vice president of Lewin/VHI and senior scholar at the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences. Derzon was chairman of the board of the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and served as director of the University of California’s Hospitals and Clinics. Before that, he was the first deputy commissioner of hospitals for the city of New York.³

In his two years as director, Mr. Derzon faced the difficult task of minimizing fraud and abuse in the programs and the apparently insurmountable task of slowing the soaring rate of hospital cost increases.

Throughout his career, Mr. Derzon was a proponent of universal health care coverage.

Derzon passed away in June 2009.
LEONARD D. SCHAEFFER  

Leonard D. Schaeffer served as HCFA administrator from 1978 to 1980.

He relocated Medicare from the Social Security office in Washington, D.C., to the Medicaid office in Baltimore in order to foster worker interaction for further problem solving.4

To the controversy over whether the market could provide affordable, good-quality health care and ethically earn a profit, Schaeffer noted, “In our current system, there isn’t enough money in the world to deliver all of the care that can be delivered, to all of the people who could consume it. So the concept of improving healthcare’s administrative underpinnings so that we can concentrate more resources on its actual delivery is a very powerful notion to me.”5

Schaeffer also served as assistant secretary of management and budget at the Department of Health Education and Welfare in 1978.

Schaeffer was chairman & CEO of WellPoint Health Networks, Inc. from 1992 through 2004 and continued to serve as chairman through 2005. Under his leadership, WellPoint was selected by FORTUNE magazine as America’s “Most Admired Health Care Company” for six consecutive years. In 1986, Schaeffer was recruited as CEO to WellPoint’s predecessor company, Blue Cross of California, when it was near bankruptcy, and managed its turnaround.6

As of 2015, he is the Judge Robert Maclay Widney Chair and professor at the University of Southern California and is a senior advisor to TPG Capital, a private equity firm.
HOWARD N. NEWMAN
07/1980 – 01/1981

Howard N. Newman was HCFA administrator from 1980 to 1981.

In 1968, Mr. Newman was selected for the prestigious White House Fellows program in Washington, DC, where he worked in the Office of Management and Budget. He subsequently worked as commissioner of the Medical Services Administration in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Department (HEW), where he worked with the new Medicaid program. In 1974, he became the first president of the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, but returned to federal service in 1980 to serve as HCFA administrator.

After HCFA, Newman was a partner in the law firm of Powell, Goldstein, Frazer & Murphy in Washington, D.C., and later served as dean of the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University.

A strong union supporter, Mr. Newman worked closely with the Service Employees International Union, traveling to Poland and advising on healthcare policy issues. He was also very involved with the Israeli healthcare system, serving on the American Advisory Board of Israel’s Brookdale Institute.

An avid squash player, Mr. Newman was a fierce competitor on the courts, and nationally ranked in senior divisions. In 1985, he represented the U.S. in the Israeli Maccabia (Jewish Olympic) games, winning a silver medal.

Newman passed away in July 2011.
CAROLYNE K. DAVIS
03/1981 – 08/1985

Carolyne K. Davis served as HCFA administrator from 1981 to 1985. She was HCFA’s fourth administrator and the first woman to hold this position since the agency was created in 1977. Her tenure in the job surpassed that of her three predecessors combined.

As HCFA’s administrator, Davis oversaw the functions of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, which finance health care services for 54 million poor, elderly, and disabled Americans. Expenditures on their behalf totaled nearly $100 billion in Fiscal Year 1985.

“The design and implementation of Medicare’s prospective payment system is clearly the major, long-lasting achievement of my stewardship. But I also regard as important my emphasis on engaging the agency in a broader and continuing dialogue with our publics — the beneficiaries, the doctors, the hospitals, and a range of other private and public interests. I regard my open door policy as one of great importance in an era of skepticism toward government.”

Before becoming HCFA administrator, Davis was associate vice president of academic affairs at the University of Michigan, where she also served as dean of the School of Nursing. She was chair of the Community Health Accreditation Program and was an elected member of the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences.

In 1985, she left the administration and became a national and international health care advisor for Ernst & Young, a Washington, D.C. consulting firm.

Davis passed away in July 2003.
WILLIAM L. ROPER, MD
05/1986 – 02/1989

William L. Roper, MD served as HCFA administrator from 1986 to 1989. As of 2015, William L. Roper was dean of the School of Medicine and vice chancellor for medical affairs at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) and CEO of the UNC Health Care System. He also is professor of health policy and administration in the School of Public Health, and is professor of pediatrics and of social medicine in the School of Medicine at UNC. From 1997 until 2004, he was dean of the School of Public Health at UNC.10

In June 2012, he expressed his support of the Supreme Court decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act:

“One critical tenet of UNC Health Care’s mission is ensuring that patients have access to excellent and affordable care. The Supreme Court’s action today will continue to help make that possible, as the almost one in five North Carolinians who do not have health care insurance will now have coverage. Evidence clearly shows that those who do not have insurance are less healthy than those who do. I am hopeful this decision will lead to a healthier and more productive North Carolina.

“Health care providers across the nation, including UNC Health Care, have been reacting to the realities in health care through industry consolidation, partnerships among hospitals, physicians and other health professionals and an increased emphasis on shared responsibility for improving health outcomes and reducing costs.”11

Roper served as a director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 1990 to 1993. He served in a variety of key positions in the White House, including director of the White House Office of Policy Development and as deputy assistant to the President for domestic policy in the George H.W. Bush administration and as a White House fellow in the Reagan administration.12
GAIL R. WILENSKY
02/1990 – 03/1992

Gail R. Wilensky served as HCFA administrator from 1990 to 1992.
As of 2015, Wilensky was an economist and senior fellow at Project HOPE, an international health education foundation, where she analyzes and develops policies relating to health care reform and to ongoing changes in the health care environment. She has held this position since 1993.

She also served President George H.W. Bush as deputy assistant for policy development from 1992 to 1993, advising him on health and welfare issues.

From 1997 to 2001, she chaired the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, which advises Congress on payment and other issues relating to Medicare. From 2001 to 2003, she co-chaired the President’s Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation’s Veterans, which covered health care for both veterans and military retirees.13

In 2007, Wilensky served as a commissioner on the President’s Commission on Care for America’s Returning Wounded Warriors.14

She is an elected member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.
BRUCE C. VLADECK
05/1993 – 09/1997

Bruce C. Vladeck served as HCFA administrator from 1993 to 1997. In that position, he directed the Medicare and Medicaid programs, providing health insurance to more than 65 million Americans with combined annual expenditures of more than $300 billion, and played a central role in the formulation and enactment of the Medicare, Medicaid, and Child Health provisions of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

Before joining the federal government, Vladeck served ten years as president of the United Hospital Fund of New York. He has also held positions on the faculty of Columbia University, at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and, from 1979 through 1982, as assistant commissioner of the New Jersey State Department of Health. At the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, to which he was elected in 1986, Vladeck chaired the Committee on Health Care for Homeless People.

After his service at HCFA, Vladeck was appointed by President Clinton to the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, a role that helped reinforce his reputation as one of the nation’s most committed and articulate advocates for improving and expanding health insurance for the elderly, the disabled, and the poor.

Vladeck subsequently was a senior vice-president for policy, Mount Sinai NYU Health, and professor of health policy and geriatrics.

In 2009, Vladeck became a senior advisor to Nexera Inc., a consulting subsidiary of the Greater New York Hospital Association.15
NANCY-ANN MIN DEPARLE

Nancy-Ann Min DeParle served as HCFA administrator from 1997 to 2000, during the Clinton administration.

From 2009 to 2011, she had served as the director of the White House Office of Health Reform, leading the Obama administration’s efforts on health care issues, including the passing of the Affordable Care Act. More recently, from 2011 to January 2013, she served as the deputy chief of staff for policy in the administration of President Obama.16

DeParle wrote an opinion piece for the Washington Post on May 9, 2013, entitled, “The successes of Obamacare.” She wrote, “Three years, 34 repeal votes, one Supreme Court decision and a presidential election later, some are questioning whether government is capable of implementing the historic law. Concern is understandable: The Affordable Care Act (ACA) transforms a health-care system that accounts for one-sixth of the U.S. economy and is central to our lives. But recent history shows that big changes in health-care policy can be implemented.” In her conclusion, she observed, “Large-scale change is never easy. But recent health-care reforms have outperformed their critics. When the Affordable Care Act does the same, Obamacare will have completed its journey from a pitched partisan battle to a national point of pride.”17

DeParle began her work for the federal government in 1993, when she became associate director of the Office of Management and Budget in President Clinton’s administration, a position she held until she became HCFA administrator.18

From 2001 to 2009, in addition to serving on corporate boards DeParle was a managing director of a private equity firm that invested in health care companies, a trustee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and held fellowships at two universities.19
THOMAS A. SCULLY
05/2001 – 12/2003

Thomas A. Scully served as CMS administrator from 2001 until 2003. On July 1, 2001, he presided over the agency’s name change from HCFA to CMS.

In a February 2014 interview with Managed Care magazine, Scully said, “I changed the name the first week I was there to CMS, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The Health Care Financing Administration was perceived to be bureaucratic.”

Before coming to CMS, Scully worked at the White House in the first Bush administration: as deputy assistant to the President and counselor to the director of the Office of Management and Budget from 1992 to 1993; and as associate director of OMB for human resources, veterans and labor from 1989 to 1992.

Scully played an active role in passing Medicare reform and Medicare prescription drug legislation: “And I went back into the government in 2001 mainly to get a drug benefit passed. We spent a lot of time designing Medicare Part D and getting that passed… When I agreed to [run CMS for President George W. Bush], I told him my primary goal was to design a drug benefit and get it through Congress… A lot of people thought we’d never do that. They thought we weren’t serious about it. But seniors needed a drug benefit, especially poor seniors.

He initiated the first public reporting and disclosure for comparative quality among hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies and dialysis centers.


In 2003, Medicare spent $600,000 to have a blimp fly at sporting events and state fairs, as part of a $30-million ad campaign to make the program better known to its 40-million participants. The white blimp bore a likeness of the American flag and blue lettering advertising 1-800-Medicare, the phone number the public can call with questions about benefits. Scully said the ad campaign was needed because “the average senior has no clue what the benefits are.”

After leaving CMS in 2004, Scully began working simultaneously as a general partner with Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe, a health care private equity firm, and as senior counsel at Alston & Bird, a law firm and health care lobbying organization.
MARK B. McCLELLAN, MD
03/2004 – 10/2006

Mark B. McClellan served as CMS administrator from 2004 until 2006. He came to CMS from the FDA, where he served as commissioner from 2002 to 2004.

McClellan was serving as CMS administrator when the Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D) went into effect, January 2006.

He served earlier at the White House, as health policy coordinator and a member of President George W. Bush’s Council of Economic Advisers, from 2000 to 2001. In the Clinton administration, McClellan worked on domestic policy, as a deputy assistant secretary of the Treasury in 1998 to 99.25

As of 2015, McClellan was a senior fellow and director of the Health Care Innovation and Value Initiative at the Brookings Institution.26

Prior positions include working as a professor at Stanford University and as a practicing internist.
DONALD BERWICK, MD
07/2010 – 12/2011

Donald Berwick served as CMS administrator from July 2010 to December 2011.

Berwick began his career as a pediatrician, practicing at both Boston Children’s Hospital and the Harvard Community Health Plan (HCHP). At HCHP, he served primarily underprivileged kids from communities of color. He learned that caring for Massachusetts’ children also meant improving the hospitals, health systems, and communities that families depend on.

In 1991, with a small seed grant, he founded the non-profit Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and grew it to international stature. As president and CEO of IHI, Berwick led projects and massive initiatives credited with saving hundreds of thousands of lives in the United States and around the world. The most famous of these, the 100,000 Lives Campaign, involved nearly every hospital in America.

During his tenure at IHI, Berwick was also a close advisor to the World Health Organization and many national leaders; in 2005, he was knighted by the Queen of England for his work making British health care more efficient.

At one of the most critical times in our nation’s history, Berwick implemented many of the most important provisions of the Affordable Care Act, ensuring that young people could stay on their parents’ health plans until the age of 26, kids with preexisting conditions would no longer be denied the care they need, and insurance companies would be subjected to new levels of transparency.

Reflecting on his time as CMS’ administrator, Berwick said, “If lesson one for me is, “Remember the patient,” then lesson two is this: “Help those who help others.” Those thoughts—not the negativity—guided me in DC, and they made my time there meaningful. They are reminders of what is truly important; not the noise, but simply this: to help the people who need our help the most.”

As of 2015, Berwick was president emeritus and senior fellow at IHI.
MARILYN TAVENNER
05/2013 – 02/2015

Marilyn Tavenner became CMS administrator in May 2013. Previously, Tavenner was principal deputy administrator. In this position, she oversaw policy development and implementation as well as management and operations.

Prior to assuming her CMS leadership role, Tavenner served for four years as Virginia’s Secretary of Health and Human Resources where she oversaw 18,000 employees and a $9 billion annual budget to administer Medicaid, mental health, social services, public health, aging, disabilities agencies, and children’s services.

Before entering government service, Tavenner spent 25 years working for the Hospital Corporation of American (HCA).

Tavenner has worked with many community and professional organizations, serving as a board member of the American Hospital Association, as president of the Virginia Hospital Association, as chairperson of the Chesterfield Business Council, and as a life-long member of the Rotary Club. Her contributions also include providing leadership in such public service organizations as the March of Dimes, the United Way and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. In addition to numerous business awards, Tavenner has been recognized for her volunteer activities, including the 2007 recipient of the March of Dimes Citizen of the Year Award.28
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