

## **2011 Health Policy Scholarship Roundup**

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As a recent participant in the Brandeis Heller School weeklong course on Health Policy and Leadership in 2011, I would like to submit the following report to the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the Eastern association for the Surgery of Trauma (EAST) who co-sponsored my attendance. Overall, the course was an amazing experience that I believe will improve my effectiveness as a surgical leader. The course was very intense with sessions from 8am-5pm every day. Although we were in the classroom nearly the entire time, the interactive flavor made the time fly by. These group discussions were the highlight of the course. Getting a group of practicing surgeons from disparate backgrounds, specialties, geographic locations, and clinical practice settings to share ideas about how to make change in the surgical community was invaluable. This was the kind of experience when you learn more from the classmates than the instructor.

The classroom topics were amazingly varied considering that this was supposed to be a focused learning experience. Although my individual leadership goals focus more on quality and safety of surgical care, with a clinical research angle, I think the exposure to the other parts of the curriculum will help me become an overall better leader with a wider range and scope of influence. For me, the sessions led by Jon Chilingarian were far and away the most interesting and applicable for the entire audience. They give insight into how to work in group, how to make decisions, and how to strategically plan for the future. These skills are useful in almost every aspect of medical practice as well as in daily life. The daylong session on negotiations by Jeff Prottas was excellent as well. The whole class gained insight into techniques used by skilled negotiators to “get more stuff.” The financial literacy sessions led by Brenda Anderson were crucial to get me as a physician onto the same page as the non-clinical administrative and money managing team.

Although the topic was not originally very appealing to me, the discussions led by Stuart Altman on national healthcare policy gave me a better understanding of where we have been and where the country is going in terms of paying for healthcare. The sessions by Mechanic and Tompkins were useful as well and should be included again as they helped gain insight into what an accountable care organization (ACO) really is and how it could function in the future. The session led by Jody Hoffer Gittel was not as effective as others. I am very interested in the topic of how to make change and how to get organizations to move toward higher performance; unfortunately, the session did not give me any concrete techniques or specific approaches in this regard.

The most important take-away points from the entire week are not something that can be simply put into words. The entire experience changed my entire outlook on how to effectively lead and change the world of surgery. Taking an entire week away from clinical practice as well as administrative and research obligations to focus on leadership skills was a huge eye-opener. This new perspective will influence the overall approach that I will take in all future endeavors whether they be locally at my hospital or on a larger national agenda.