Symposium Keynotes

Federalism, Medicaid, and the Changing State Role In Healthcare

Professor Nicole Huberfeld
Edward R. Utley Professor of Health Law, BU School of Law and Public Health

Nicole Huberfeld is Edward R. Utley Professor of Health Law at Boston University, with appointments at the Law School and School of Public Health. She chairs the BU Health Law Program and is a founding Co-Director of the BU Program on Reproductive Justice. Her research examines health law, constitutional law, and law's role as a structural determinant of health, with particular attention to federalism, health reform, Medicaid, and reproductive health. She has authored more than 100 publications, including leading casebooks, articles, chapters, and commentaries. Her work has been cited by the U.S. Supreme Court, other courts, and government agencies. In 2025, she received the BUSPH Faculty Award for Excellence in Research and Scholarship and the "Do" Award.

Professor Huberfeld's discussion will examine how recent legislation has tilted the traditional federal structure of healthcare funding, creating greater responsibilities on the states to provide robust care.

The Future of New Mexico Healthcare Policy

Representative Reena Szczepanski

Reena Szczepanski serves as the House Majority Floor Leader in the NM House of Representatives and represents District 47 in Santa Fe. Elected in 2022, she is the first Asian American to serve in legislative leadership in New Mexico. A longtime public health advocate, Reena has led efforts on healthcare, reproductive rights, harm reduction, economic justice, and climate action. She previously directed Emerge New Mexico and the Drug Policy Alliance, and has spent her career fighting for equity and opportunity.

Three Branches Update

Representatives from New Mexico's judicial, legislative, and executive branches will share updates on their respective healthcare initiatives and efforts to improve access to care.

SB 3: The Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act

Justice David K. Thomson has served on New Mexico's Supreme Court since 2019, including as Chief Justice from 2024 to 2026. A former First Judicial District Court judge and Deputy Attorney General, he is a leader in judicial education, innovation, and court access. He has also advanced implementation of the Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act, integrating courts into planning to improve treatment access, strengthen public safety, and reduce reliance on the criminal justice system.

HB99: Medical Malpractice Reform Update

Representative Christine Chandler is an attorney who has represented New Mexico House District 43 since 2019. She chairs the House Judiciary Committee and interim Courts, Corrections and Justice Committee. A leader on healthcare policy, Chandler sponsored 2026 House Bill 99, which amended Medical Malpractice Act provisions governing occurrences, punitive damages, and Patient's Compensation Fund payments. Her work brings a legislative perspective to debates over provider retention, patient protections, liability, and access to care across New Mexico.

SB1: Health Care Grants & Stablilization

Dr. Alanna Dancis currently serves as interim Medicaid Director for the New Mexico Health Care Authority. Her presentation will focus on the HCA's efforts to roll out emergency funding for those losing medicaid benefits in 2027. Dr. Dancis previously served as Chief Medical Officer for the New Mexico Medicaid program. Prior to state government, Dr. Dancis was the Medical Director and a primary care clinician at the Senior Health Clinic within the University of New Mexico Hospital system – the first Nurse Practitioner to serve as a Medical Director in the system's hitory.

Native Healthcare Delivery and Policy Practice

This panel explores how federalism shapes healthcare in Tribal Nations, including tribal sovereignty, federal trust responsibilities, and the roles of the Indian Health Service, tribal programs, urban Indian organizations, and states. Discussion will address Medicaid, jurisdiction, partnerships, access, coordination, and health outcomes.

Moderated by: Mary Hudetz, Director of Education and Training for the Indigenous Journalists Association

Leonard D. Thomas, M.D., an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, serves as Area Director for the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service. He leads 10 service units serving 25 Pueblos and Tribes across New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas, overseeing hospitals, health centers, health stations, urban Indian programs, and dental services.

Vanessa Racehorse is a member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and a descendant of the Cherokee Nation and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. She is an Associate Professor of Law at the University of Colorado Law School, where she teaches in the American Indian Law Program. Her scholarship focuses on American Indian & Indigenous Peoples law, health care law and policy, and environmental justice.

Grant Christensen is a recognized Federal Indian law scholar and Alabama Law professor whose work examines civil procedure, federal courts, and conflicts of law. He has served as an appellate judge for the Standing Rock Sioux, Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, co-authored two textbooks, and taught at UNM's Pre-Law Summer Institute. His scholarship is widely cited, and his article, *Interpreting Self-Determination with IHS* is forthcoming in New Mexico Law Review Vol. 57.

Dr. Julianna Reece, MD, MBA, MPH, is a Board-Certified Family Medicine physician with 20 years' experience in Primary Care and Public Health, focused on American Indian/Alaska Native healthcare. She serves as Chief Medical Officer for Kewa Pueblo Health Corporation and previously served as Chief Medical Officer for Albuquerque Area IHS.

Access to Maternal Healthcare in Rural and Underserved Communities

Panelists will explore barriers to maternal healthcare in New Mexico and opportunities to improve access to care during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

Moderated by: Patrick Lohmann, Staff Writer for Source New Mexico

John Cogan is a UConn Law professor specializing in health insurance, healthcare finance, federal health programs, and policy. He previously held senior roles at HHS and Rhode Island's Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner. His scholarship covers Medicare, Medicaid, the ACA, HIPAA, and maternal mortality. His article, *New Mexico's Maternal Mortality Crisis and the Promising Future for Community Paramedicine*, is forthcoming in the New Mexico Law Review Vol. 57.

Nicolle Arthun is a Dine Certified Nurse-Midwife and founder of Transending Strategies LLC, an Indigenous women-led maternal health consulting firm. She founded Changing Women Initiative, the nation's first Native women-led birth nonprofit, and works in midwifery, Medicaid, Indian health policy, rural maternity care, federal policymaking, and maternal-care litigation.

Erin Marshall, J.D., is a New Mexico attorney, healthcare advocate, and policy professional with more than 20 years' experience improving care for women, infants, and families. She led New Mexico's Baby-Friendly Hospital initiative and advanced lactation-care licensure. Through DULCE New Mexico, she connects legal assistance with pediatric and perinatal healthcare.

Trevor Quiner is a Maternal-Fetal Medicine physician and UNM School of Medicine faculty member. He completed his OBGYN residency training in Phoenix, AZ, before moving to Albuquerque, NM, to pursue his fellowship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine at UNM. He now calls New Mexico home. His passion is to work to decrease maternal morbidity and mortality in his role as an educator and by improving systems for patient care.

Dismantling Rural Access Barriers

Panelists will discuss barriers to healthcare in rural and tribal communities and explore how workforce development, community partnerships, and innovative care models can expand access across New Mexico.

Moderated by: Aja Brooks, Statewide Rural Justice Coordinator

Dr. Jesse Barnes is a physician at El Pueblo Family Health in Bernalillo, NM, and Director of the Rural and Urban Underserved Program at UNM School of Medicine. A UNM residency graduate, he focuses on historically underserved populations, including Spanish-speaking communities and patients with substance use and complex transgender health needs.

Zackeree Sean Kelin is a member of the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma and a founding partner at Davis Kelin Law Firm in Albuquerque. His practice focuses on medical malpractice, catastrophic injuries, civil rights, Tribal law, and complex litigation. He previously represented indigent clients in tribal, state, and federal courts.

Shandiin Wood is a public health and systems-oriented leader serving as Director of the Ohkay Owingeh Health and Human Services Division. He previously led health operations for New Mexico's Department of Health. His work spans epidemiology, program evaluation, data governance, emergency response, grant development, health systems transformation, and health equity.

Andrea Zurawski is the Project ECHO Director of Border Programs. A bilingual nurse, she oversees the growth of Project ECHO across Latin America and directs Project ECHO Programs for diabetes and chronic conditions across New Mexico. She specializes in designing cross-cultural initiatives that improve access in underserved communities.

A Constitutional Conversation: A State Constitutional Right to Healthcare

This discussion will explore whether the New Mexico Constitution protects a right to healthcare and what recognizing such a right could mean for access to care, state responsibilities, and health equity.

Moderated by the Hon. Judge Linda Vanzi

Judge Linda Vanzi retired from the New Mexico Judiciary in 2020 after serving for 12 years as a judge on the New Mexico Court of Appeals, including two years as chief judge, following four years of service as a trial judge at the Second Judicial District Court, Civil Division. Bored by retirement, she joined the Rodey Law Firm where she practices in both the Complex and Commercial Litigation Group, as well as, the Labor and Employment Group. She has a special interest in civil rights litigation and state constitutional law, and has written extensively on the subject. Judge Vanzi also acts as a mediator and arbitrator on a regular basis, and continues to teach substantive classes at the UNM School of law. She is no longer bored.

Carson Thornton Gonzales was born and raised in downtown Albuquerque, received a B.A. in English Literature from Fordham University and a J.D. from the University of New Mexico School of Law. After graduating, Carson clerked for the Honorable Zachary A. Ives at the New Mexico Court of Appeals. She is now a litigator at Egolf + Ferlic + Martinez, where her practice focuses on civil rights, wrongful death, and sexual abuse and harassment litigation.

Clay L. Wilwol is a litigation associate at Rothstein Donatelli LLP, where his practice focuses on criminal defense and civil rights cases in federal and state courts. Before joining Rothstein, Clay served as a law clerk to Judge James O. Browning at the United States District Court, and Judge Zachary A. Ives on the New Mexico Court of Appeals. He is a graduate of the University of New Mexico School of Law. **Carson and Clay are BFF's!**

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