

## Meeting Faculty

### Julie Baak

Julie Baak is the Practice Manager of The Arthritis Center in Saint Louis, Missouri. She has written advocacy articles for the National Infusion Center Association, has overturned infusion drug mandates from specialty pharmacy to Buy and Bill from every Payer, including obtaining a 5-year override for a single patient from UHC's self-funded Union Pacific Railroad plan. She is passionate about the patient experience and is an amazing patient advocate. Her office is a Rheumatology Center of Excellence, with a robust social media presence, two therapy dogs are on staff in her infusion suite and she is focused on delivering Value Based Care in 2021. You can reach her by email: [julie@drbaak.com](mailto:julie@drbaak.com).



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### Nicholas J. Bronni

Solicitor General of Arkansas

Nicholas Bronni became the Solicitor General of Arkansas in 2018. In that role, he serves as Arkansas's chief legal strategist and is responsible for representing Arkansas before the United States Supreme Court, the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, and the Arkansas Supreme Court. He currently serves as lead counsel for a 28-State coalition in an original jurisdiction matter concerning unclaimed property before the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Bronni is also an adjunct professor of law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Bowen School of Law, where he teaches appellate litigation skills.



Mr. Bronni was Arkansas's Deputy Solicitor General from 2016 to 2018. Before returning home to Arkansas, Mr. Bronni served as a Senior Litigation Counsel with the Appellate Litigation Group at the United States Securities and Exchange Commission. At the SEC, he was responsible for representing the SEC before the federal courts of appeal. Prior to joining the SEC, Mr. Bronni was an associate in the appellate and Supreme Court litigation practice at Gibson Dunn and Crutcher LLP in Washington, DC. He clerked for the Honorable Jay S. Bybee of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Mr. Bronni graduated with *magna cum laude* honors from the University of Michigan Law School in 2005. At Michigan, he was also an editor of the *Michigan Law Review* and was elected to the Order of the Coif. Mr. Bronni received his undergraduate degree, *summa cum laude*, from the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University.

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## Assemblyman Herb Conaway, MD

The Honorable Herb Conaway, M.D., elected for a 12th term, has been serving New Jersey's 7th Legislative District as its assemblyman for 22 years. In the 219th Legislature, Conaway is a leader in the Democratic majority, Chairman of the Health and Senior Services Committee, member of the Appropriations Committee and member of the Science and Technology Committee.



Conaway is the only member of the New Jersey State Legislature with both a medical and law degree. He specializes in internal medicine and serves as Director of the Burlington County Health Department. He earned his bachelor's degree in politics from Princeton University, his medical degree at Jefferson Medical College and his law degree from Rutgers Law School, Camden. Conaway also served as a U.S. Air Force Captain in the Medical Corps at McGuire Air Force Base, as a general medical officer and as an assistant director of the primary care clinic for the base.

In addition to playing a leading role in most of the major health legislation signed into law during his 12-year tenure as health chair, Conaway sponsored New Jersey's school funding formula, increased fiscal accountability within school districts, added technology to core curriculum standards and modernized nutritional standards in public schools. He has also sponsored successful legislation advancing environmental protection, property tax relief, veterans services and public safety.

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## Charlie Cook

Editor and Publisher of *The Cook Political Report*  
Columnist for the *National Journal*

Charlie Cook is widely considered to be one of the nation's most respected and impartial analyst of American politics, elections and political trends. As the editor and publisher of *The Cook Political Report*, columnist for *National Journal*, political analyst for NBC News and co-author of the upcoming 2020 edition of the *Almanac of American Politics*, Charlie's prodigious writing is a direct line to the heart of politics. Deemed "the Picasso of election analysis" by *The Wall Street Journal*, he produces the sharpest and most impartial political handicapping in the business, serving as the one-man, go-to-source for Americans who want to be "in the know" about politics.



Cook's expertise receives endless praise. *The New York Times* called him "one of the best political handicappers in the nation" and noted that *The Cook Political Report* is "a newsletter that both Parties regard as authoritative." *The Washington Post* said he is "perhaps the best non-partisan tracker of Congressional races," and the *Washingtonian* called him "the man who knows more about politics than anyone else."

With his encyclopedic knowledge, memorable stories, quick wit, and meaningful insights, Charlie Cook focuses on the broad implications of the latest election results. Using poll

numbers, economic indicators, and historical data, he forecasts the fortunes of each party in a non-partisan way, leaving audiences with the concrete information they need in today's political environment.

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## **Nilsa Cruz, BS, CRHC**

A former nominee for the ARHP Ann Konkel Advocacy Award, Nilsa Cruz has created a solid track record for advocating for Rheumatology practices and patients at the local, state, and national levels over the last 20 years. She is also a Certified Rheumatology Healthcare Coder.



For the past 12 years, Nilsa has been a consultant member with UnitedHealthcare, Regional Administrative Advisory Council Committee, subsequently transitioning to the National Steering Committee, providing “unvarnished” administrative input. She has also been a member of ARHP’s Practice Committee, ACR’s Insurance Subcommittee (ISC), Committee on Rheumatologic Care (CORC), RheumPAC, and the Wisconsin Rheumatology Association where she is known as an “advocacy hawk”. Her successful campaign to advocate for Rheumatology patients is a result of her ability to bring the right people together, even before they know they have shared interests. Additionally, her 12 years of experience as a Pharmaceutical Sales Consultant has taught her to follow through and “close the deal” when applied to advocacy.

Nilsa’s compassion, sense of collaboration, energy, and enthusiasm, know no bounds, and rheumatology patients are the clear beneficiaries. She can identify an emerging problem, especially in the realm of insurance companies, PBMs, and patient access to therapy, and quickly educate others about the causes and potential solutions.

She understands the ins and outs of running a private rheumatology practice, which she has done for the last 20 years as Practice Manager for her husband’s rheumatology practice in Milwaukee, WI.

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## **Madelaine A. Feldman, MD, FACR**

Dr. Feldman is the founding member and past president of the Rheumatology Alliance of Louisiana, President of the Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO), and has served on the insurance subcommittee for the ACR. She is the Chair of the Alliance for Safe Biologic Medicines. She has served on the board of the Institute for Patient access and biologic working group for AfPA. A Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at Tulane University School of Medicine, she has been named one of the Top Doctors in New Orleans for over 10 years. She was awarded the Distinguished Service Award in 2018 by the Tulane Medical Alumni association and named one of the 2017 top 50 women in New Orleans by New Orleans City Business.



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## **Karen Ferguson**

Karen Ferguson is a proven health care executive and entrepreneur with over 20 years of leadership within the health care industry. Ms. Ferguson is currently the Practice Administrator at Arthritis Northwest, PLLC, and co-founder/CEO of Discus Analytics, Inc., a healthcare IT company addressing the unmet need for organized, discrete, and clinically actionable information supporting the physician and patient's longitudinal journey together. Discus utilizes real world evidence and decision-based platforms in real time, to help practices reduce administrative burdens, identify gaps of care, track treatment effectiveness and demonstrate disease management for high-risk patients with rheumatic disease.



As practice administrator for Arthritis Northwest, she led her organization to earn the national recognition for quality care, "NCQA Patient-Centered Specialty Practice Recognition" which distinguishes practices that communicate, collaborate and integrate care in ways that demonstrates constant improvement through communication, coordination and providing access of care. This recognition signals to primary care practices that Arthritis Northwest is ready to be an effective partner in caring for patients they have in common.

Ms. Ferguson is past President of the Washington State Medical Group Management Association and the Inland Empire Medical Group Managers Association. She is currently a member of the Genentech and AbbVie Practice Administrator Speaker Bureaus. Ms. Ferguson received her Master of Science in Health Education/Promotion from Whitworth College, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education from San Diego State University.

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## **Judith Gorsuch, J.D.**

Judith Gorsuch, J.D. joined Hart Health Strategies Inc. from the West Health Policy Center, where she led the policy and analytic work to advance the Center's mission to lower health care costs. Prior to West, Ms. Gorsuch served as Health Counsel to U.S. Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ), the Senate Minority Whip and a senior member of the Senate Finance Committee. In that role, she advised the Senator on all health policy issues, including Medicare payment and Affordable Care Act implementation. Ms. Gorsuch previously served as the Senior Manager of Policy for Amgen, in its Global Government Affairs division. While there, she provided policy support for the lobbying team on issues ranging from intellectual property law to Food and Drug Administration matters. Ms. Gorsuch earned her law degree from The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law and her B.A. from The George Washington University.

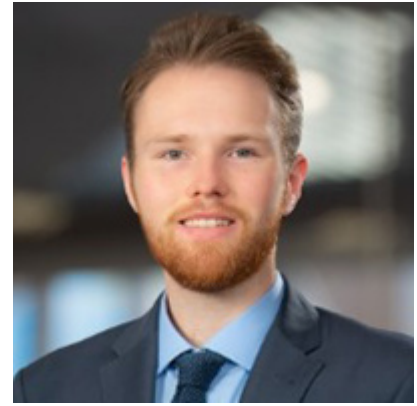


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## **Brian Henderson**



Brian Henderson manages state policy and government affairs for the Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations, where he works on a broad array of patient access, physician practice, and payer relations issues. Prior to working with CSRO, he worked in the Canadian Federal Government on analyzing health and energy policy issues.



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## Kelly Hughes

Kelly Hughes is a program director in the health program at the National Conference of State Legislatures. In this capacity, Kelly manages staff and projects related to health care access, costs, and coverage topics, including rural health, health care workforce and health care facilities. Before joining NCSL in 2019, Kelly served as senior program officer for the National Network of Public Health Institutes where she directed the Bridging Across Sectors for Health team, provided oversight across all programs and funders, and managed several cooperative agreements with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Kelly is a graduate of CDC's Public Health Prevention Service fellowship and has 10+ years of experience in Federal and state government, non-profit, research, and health care settings. She received her Bachelor of Science from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and her Master of Public Health from Emory University. She is a registered dietitian and a certified health education specialist.



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## Shawn Johnson

Shawn Johnson is a Senior Assistant Attorney General who has served the Arkansas Attorney General's Office for 12 years. Originally from Fort Smith, Arkansas, Shawn holds degrees from Hendrix College, the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, and the University of Arkansas School of Law. Shawn has served the Attorney General's Civil Department and for the past seven years the Consumer Protection Division where Shawn has prosecuted cases against bad actors such as deceptive medical care advertisers and used car salesmen. Most recently, Shawn defended Act 900 of 2015 — a pharmacy minimum payment law that seeks to rein in the abusive conduct of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) — and the United States Supreme Court recently granted certiorari in favor of Arkansas.



## **Senator Fred H. Mills, Jr.**

Senator Fred H. Mills, Jr. has represented Senate District 22 in the Louisiana Legislature since 2011. In 2016, he was appointed by Senate President John Alario to serve as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, overseeing the physical, behavioral, and social health care policy and legislative directives governing the citizens of Louisiana. In January 2020, Senate President Patrick “Page” Cortez reappointed Senator Mills to serve as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and also appointed him as Senate Parliamentarian (2020-2024). He also serves on the following Senate committees: Finance (interim member), Select Committee on Coastal Restoration & Flood Protection and the Select Committee on Women and Children.



Prior to being elected to the Senate, he represented House District 46 in the Louisiana House of Representatives from 2007 to 2011. He has been the author of several pieces of monumental legislation regarding behavioral healthcare, access to physical therapy, medical marijuana, and numerous bills tackling the opioid crisis. Senator Mills began his lifetime of public service in 2000, when he was elected to the St. Martin Parish Council, serving in that capacity for eight years.

In addition to his public service, Senator Mills has been the President and CEO of Farmers Merchants Bank and Trust for eighteen years and a pharmacist and owner of Cashway Pharmacy in Parks, LA since 1980. Previously, he served as the executive director for the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy. Senator Mills serves on numerous public and private boards and commissions including the Acadian Ambulance Board and was the founder and is the current President and CEO of the St. Martin Economic Development Authority (SMEDA). He has received countless prestigious awards for his outstanding commitment not only to the people of his Senate District, but throughout the entire state. Senator Mills is a graduate of Breaux Bridge High School and the University of Louisiana at Monroe, College of Pharmacy. He is happily married to his loving wife, Debbie, for 44 years.

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## **Delegate Matthew Rohrbach, MD**

He was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates in 2014 representing the 17<sup>th</sup> District. He was re-elected in 2016 and 2018. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Committee for the Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse. He is also serving as the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Senior, Children and Family Issues as well as serving on the Education, Health & Human Resources, and the Technology and Infrastructure Committees. He was selected as a featured speaker for the Council of State Government National Meeting in December 2018. He was chosen in December 2018 to a fellowship on Opioid Abuse from the National Conference of State Legislatures. He was selected in March 2019 to the National Committee for the Healthy States Policy Initiative through the Council of State Governments.



## Larry Van Horn

Larry Van Horn is a leading expert and researcher on health care management and economics. His current research focus centers around the shift to consumer purchase of health care and the impact it will have on new delivery models. His research has appeared in such leading journals ranging from the *Journal of Health Economics*, to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, to the *Harvard Business Review*. His commentary regarding health care economics appears frequently in main stream media ranging from USA Today to Fox Business.



Professor Van Horn is responsible for the graduate health care programs at the Owen Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University. He founded and directs the Center for Healthcare Market Innovation at the Owen Graduate School of Management. He also holds courtesy appointments in both the medical and law schools. Professor Van Horn is a highly sought-after speaker on the topic of health care reform and markets for national associations and corporations. He has consulted with most of the largest hospital systems and insurers in the US on topics of data analysis as well as antitrust concerns. Together with Sen. Bill Frist, Prof. Van Horn created and has co-directed the Nashville Healthcare Council Fellows Program.

He is the founder and CEO of Preverity Inc, founder and partner of LVH Economics LLC, and a Senior Professional with Berkeley Research Group. He is on the board of directors for Community Health Care Realty Trust (NYSE: CHCT), Savida, and Preverity. He previously served on the boards of Quorum Health Corporation (NYSE: QHC) and Pierian BioSciences. He is a member of the CEO Council for Council Capital, and advisory boards for Harpeth Capital and the Mainsail Group.

When Prof. Van Horn is not worrying about the world of health care he likes to retreat to his cattle farm in Leipers Fork, TN and run his heavy equipment.