



## THE KAISER COMMISSION ON **Medicaid and the Uninsured**

### **Are We Holding the Line on Health Coverage for Low-Income Families? Washington, DC**

#### **Speaker Biographies**

**The Honorable Mark R. Warner** has been Governor of Virginia since January 2002. Governor Warner has taken a business-like approach to reforming government services and spending, navigating Virginia through a \$6 billion revenue shortfall, and making choices and investments in education from pre-school to graduate school to create a Commonwealth of opportunity for all. Governor Warner has delivered balanced budgets on time and without partisan rancor or gridlock, while preserving funds for critical priorities such as K-12 public education, law enforcement and homeland security, and social services for the most vulnerable Virginians. Under Governor Warner's leadership, Virginia was one of a handful of states in the nation that actually increased funding for schools this year. In 2003, the Governor and the General Assembly worked in a bipartisan way to enact his government reform agenda, which has been described as the most sweeping reform of state government in a generation. The plan brings long overdue changes in the way the state delivers mental health, workforce development, and veterans care services. It requires more discipline in state budgets and efficiency in service delivery, and it better protects the Commonwealth from the threat of terrorism. Before he became governor, Governor Warner had a successful business career in venture capital, funding innovative ideas, and creating jobs and prosperity throughout Virginia and the nation. He helped found the Virginia Health Care Foundation, which has provided health care to more than 476,000 underserved Virginians in rural and urban areas. Governor Warner is married to Lisa Collis and is the father of three daughters - Madison, Gillian, and Eliza.

**Donna Cohen Ross** is the Director of Outreach at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonprofit organization that conducts research and policy analysis on issues that have an impact on low-income Americans. Ms. Cohen Ross' work focuses on improving working families' access to public benefits. She has developed and is implementing a national outreach project, *Start Healthy, Stay Healthy*, which enlists state and local government agencies, health and human services providers, schools, religious groups, businesses, community-based organizations and others to identify children who are eligible for free and low-cost health insurance programs and to help families get their children enrolled. She is also the creator of the nationally distributed outreach kit, *Free and Low-Cost Health Insurance: Children You Know Are Missing Out*. Ms. Cohen Ross also oversees the Center's acclaimed Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign. Prior to joining the Center, she worked in New Jersey for 12 years on issues related to poverty and hunger.

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**J. Ruth Kennedy** has served as Louisiana Deputy Medicaid Director since 1999, where her responsibilities include all aspects of Medicaid and SCHIP Eligibility & Enrollment, the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) Section and Program Integrity Section. She has played an integral role in the development and implementation of the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals highly successful LaCHIP outreach and enrollment efforts to reduce the number of uninsured children, for which she has been recognized by the Dallas Regional HRSA (Health Resource Service Administration) Office, and named “A Voice for Louisiana’s Children” by Agenda for Children in 2001. Ms. Kennedy received the 2001 Distinguished Service Award from the Mental Health Association in Louisiana for her leadership in improving services for persons with disabilities. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange (WEDI) as a representative of the government sector and directs Louisiana Medicaid’s HIPAA-EDI compliance efforts. She received a degree in social welfare from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, LA and began her career as a parish [county] Eligibility Worker. Ms Kennedy has over 22 years of experience in state government health and social services supervision and administration.

**Judith Solomon, J.D.** has been the Executive Director of the Children’s Health Council since 1995. The Children’s Health Council was established by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1995 to reduce the number of uninsured children in the state and to ensure that children receive the health care services available to them in the HUSKY health insurance program. At the Children’s Health Council, Ms. Solomon also directs *Covering Connecticut’s Kid and Families*, which is part of the national *Covering Kids and Families* initiative, funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Ms. Solomon is a graduate of Rutgers University Law School. Prior to becoming Executive Director of the Children’s Health Council, she worked at the Legal Aid Society of Hartford for thirteen years as a staff attorney and as Litigation Director.

**James R. Tallon, Jr.,** is Chairman of the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured and President of the United Hospital Fund, a health services research and philanthropic organization that addresses critical issues affecting hospitals and health care in New York City. He is recognized nationally for his leadership in health care policy. He serves as a member of the New York State Board of Regents, the constitutionally established supervisory body of the University of the State of New York, and is also vice chair of the New York State Archives Partnership Trust. Mr. Tallon serves on the boards of the Alliance for Health Reform, The Commonwealth Fund, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, and the Open Society Institute Program on Medicine as a Profession. In 1998-99, Mr. Tallon led the planning process to establish the National Quality Forum. He has held visiting lecturer appointments at the Columbia University and Harvard University schools of public health. Prior to joining the Fund in 1993, Mr. Tallon represented Binghamton and parts of Broome County in the New York State Assembly for nineteen years, beginning in 1975. He chaired the health committee from 1979 to 1987 and was Majority Leader from 1987 to 1993. In September, 1999, Empire State Reports named him as one of 25 leaders whose work resulted in sweeping improvements in the lives of New Yorkers in the past 25 years. Mr. Tallon received a B.A., cum laude, in political science from Syracuse University and an M.A. in international relations from Boston University. He has done additional graduate work at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.