Report

“Economics of Population Health”
Inaugural Conference of the American Society of Health Economists

Madison, Wisconsin
June 4-7, 2006
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Executive Summary
October 10 2006

The Inaugural Conference of ASHE held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, June 4-7, 2006 was regarded as a success in virtually every dimension according to attendees who responded to the online questionnaire as well as those who provided personal comments during and after the meetings. The papers were of very high quality and span almost every area of health economics. Over 330 papers were presented in 107 sessions. Eighty five posters were on display at the poster session. Presenters and attendees were particularly happy with the three paper sessions, which provided ample time for serious discussion in most cases. The ability of participants to network with colleagues was outstanding, and the social affairs were highly praised by the 535 attendees. The conference had over 10 sponsors and 7 exhibitors setting a good benchmark from which future conferences can grow.

The overall success was facilitated by the excellent facilities of the Pyle Center, the ample food provided on all occasions, the convenience of the hotels and the fine summer weather in Madison. The Presidential Address by Joseph Newhouse, the John D. MacArthur Professor of Health Policy and Management, Harvard, along with the plenary speeches by David Cutler, Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics, Harvard, and B. Douglas Bernheim, Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Economics, Stanford, were given high marks by all in attendance. The ASHE Medal winners were David Cutler and Jonathan Gruber, MIT, clearly setting a high standard for future choices. The student paper award was presented to Grant Miller, Stanford, for his paper titled "Contraception as Development? New Evidence from Family Planning in Colombia." We believe that the conference was a success in every dimension and clearly promotes the mission of ASHE to promote excellence in health economics research and provide a forum for emerging ideas and empirical results of health economics research. Clearly, this conference set very high standards for future ASHE conferences.

Local Organizing Committee / Program Planning Committee

John Mullahy,
Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences, University of Wisconsin, Madison. LOC and PPC

Barbara Wolfe,
Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences, University of Wisconsin, Madison. LOC and PPC

David Banness,
Assistant Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences, University of Wisconsin, Madison. LOC and PPC

Jody Sindelar,
President Elect of ASHE and Professor, Yale University. PPC

Richard Arnould,
Executive Director of ASHE and Emeritus Professor of Economics, University of Illinois. PPC

PPC - Program Planning Committee
LOC - Local Organizing Committee
Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee has the extremely important task of reviewing the abstracts submitted for possible inclusion in the program. This committee sets the quality standards necessary to assure that the papers are of high scientific quality.

Marjorie Baldwin, Arizona State University
Ana Balsa, University of Miami
Jessica Banthin, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Anirban Basu, University of Chicago
Glenn Blomquist, University of Kentucky
David Bradford, Medical University of South Carolina
Robert Brent, Fordham University
Kate Bundorf, Stanford University
Susan Busch, Yale University
Charles Cangialose, Amgen
Christopher Carpenter, University of California, Irvine
William Cartwright, National Institutes of Health
John Cawley, Cornell University
Sajal Chattopadhyay, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Jon Christianson, University of Minnesota
Benjamin Craig, University of Arizona
Diane Dewar, State University of New York, Albany
Jalpa Doshi, University of Pennsylvania
Jose Escarce, RAND
Roger Feldman, University of Minnesota
Bowen Garrett, Urban Institute
Kathleen Gillespie, Saint Louis University
John Goddeeris, Michigan State University
Michel Grignon, McMaster University
Michael Hagan, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Jill Herndon, University of Florida
Emmett Keeler, RAND
Genevieve Kenney, Urban Institute
Meredith Kilgore, University of Alabama, Birmingham
R. Tamara Konetzka, University of Chicago
Audrey Laporte, University of Toronto
Pierre Leger, Ecole des hautes etudes commerciales de Montreal
Rein Lepnurm, University of Saskatchewan
Douglas Leslie, Yale University
Lan Liang, University of Illinois at Chicago
Richard Lindrooth, Medical University of South Carolina
Kirsten Long, Mayo Institute
Timothy McBride, Saint Louis University
Jennifer Mellor, College of William and Mary
David Meltzer, University of Chicago
Gwendolyn Morrison, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
Edward Norton, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
John Nyman, University of Minnesota
Albert Okunade, University of Memphis
Tomas Philipson, University of Chicago
Maria Pisu, University of Alabama, Birmingham
Steve Pizer, Boston University
Nazmi Sari, University of Saskatchewan
Jennifer Schultz, University of Minnesota
Eric Seiber, Clemson University
Dennis Shea, Penn State University
Mark Showalter, Brigham Young University
Merrille Sing, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Mark Smith, Veterans Administration
Sally Stearns, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Joe Terza, Medical University of South Carolina
Mick Tilford, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
Jennifer Troyer, University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Vivian Valdmanis, University of Sciences in Philadelphia
Norman Waitzman, University of Utah
Amy Wallace, Dartmouth College
Teresa Waters, University of Tennessee
William Weeks, Dartmouth College
Rachel Werner, University of Pennsylvania
Richard Willke, Pfizer
Robert Woodward, University of New Hampshire
Tetsuji Yamada, Rutgers University
Winnie Yip, Harvard University
Xinzhi Zhang, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Stephen Zuckerman, Urban Institute
Sponsorship

The officers and management of ASHE are very aware that a conference of this caliber and size could not be conducted without the generous support of the sponsors. Their donations permit many activities and events to be a part of the conference. This support allows us to have a reasonable registration fee and include everyone in all events. We sincerely thank the sponsors for their support.

Department of Population Health Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Berkex
i3 innovus
Mayo Clinic, College of Medicine
Merck
National Federation of Independent Businesses
Sanofi Aventis
TAP Pharmaceuticals
University of Wisconsin Medical Foundation
Cornerstone Research

Exhibitors

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Center for Disease Control
Dymaxion
Elsevier
ICMPE
Wiley
World Bank
Awards Committee and Awards Presented

ASHE Medalists awarded biennially to economist age 40 or under who has made significant contributions to the field of health economics.

Recipient: (Tie vote)
- **David Cutler**
  *Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for Social Sciences, Harvard University*
- **Jonathan Gruber**
  *Professor of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

Student Paper awarded to the student who wrote the best sole-authored paper while still holding the status student in the two years prior to the conference.

Recipient:
- **Grant Miller**
  Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Stanford School of Medicine, a CHP/PCOR core faculty member, and a faculty research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research, PhD- Harvard, 2005, for his paper titled "Contraception as Development? New Evidence from Family Planning in Colombia."

Awards Committee

**Edward Norton**, Chair, Professor, Department of Health Policy and Administration, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Martin Gaynor**, E.J. Barone Chair in Health Systems Management, Professor of Economics and Health Policy, Carnegie-Mellon University

**Jose Escarce**, Professor, UCLA General Internal Medicine

**Bobbie Wolfe**, Professor, Departments of Economics, Population Health Sciences and Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Frank Sloan**, J. Alexander McMahon Professor of Health Policy and Management and Professor of Economics, Duke University

**Melayne McInnes**, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of South Carolina/Columbia

**Susan Ettner**, Professor, Department of Health Services, UCLA School of Medicine

**Jody Sindelar**, Professor, School of Public Health, Yale University, President Elect, ASHE, ex officio

**Richard Arnould**, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois Executive Director, ASHE, ex officio
Registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration Type</th>
<th>Registrants</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Paid Registrations</td>
<td>535</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-conference Registrations</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentations</td>
<td>331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Sessions</td>
<td>107</td>
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<td>Poster Presentations</td>
<td>85</td>
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Workshops & Pre-Conference Sessions

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<th>Organizer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Terza</td>
<td>Econometric Methods for Health Policy Analysis using Non-Experimental Data</td>
<td>Half-Day</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randall Ellis</td>
<td>Risk Adjustment and Predictive Modeling</td>
<td>Half-Day</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willard Manning, et al</td>
<td>Health Econometrics of Health Costs, Expenditure and Utilization Data</td>
<td>Half-Day</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 Venue

The Pyle Center on the campus of the University of Wisconsin provided a near perfect facility for the conference. Concurrent sessions were held in state of the art conference rooms that ranged in capacity from 50 to over 125 people. Eleven sessions were held at each of the designated concurrent time slots. The Pyle Center also provided excellent space for registration, exhibitors, the poster session, lunches and breaks. All activities except the plenary sessions were held at one location which provided great ease for social and business networking among the attendees and excellent attendance at the sessions. The relaxed ambiance of the conference was enhanced by being able to stroll along Lake Mendota (the Pyle Center is located on the lake) while discussing issues in health economics with a colleague, thinking about a presentation or eating lunch with friends.

Each of the three plenary sessions was held in Union Hall at the University of Wisconsin Student Union. While the room was larger than necessary, acoustics were fine and the facility was very close to the Pyle Center.

Three receptions were held. The opening reception was held late Sunday afternoon on the rooftop terrace of the Monona Terrace, a beautiful conference center built from a Frank Lloyd Wright plan, located on Lake Monona. Thanks to excellent June weather in Madison, the setting was beautiful, the food was very good, and the free water show on Lake Monona was an interesting added attraction. This reception provided an excellent start for the conference.

The second reception was held Tuesday evening on the Terrace of the Student Union following an excellent plenary speech by David Cutler. Once again the setting was very attractive along Lake Mendota. Two surprise events occurred at this event. All enjoyed a surprise visit by Bucky Badger, the mascot of the University of Wisconsin. And the spirits of the attendees were not dampened by a tornado warning that required all in attendance to go to the interior of the building. The food was excellent.

The third event was the closing reception/lunch which followed the plenary speech presented by Doug Bernheim. It too was held on the Terrace of the Student Union. Many took this opportunity to leave early, but those who remained provided many accolades for the fine food and overall ability to network with colleagues at this and other events throughout the conference.

We did not have an official hotel since registration and all activities were held in an academic setting on the campus and attendees were responsible for making their own reservations. Members of the Board and plenary speakers were hosted at the Dahlmann Campus Inn one block from the Pyle Center. Other attendees who made plans early also stayed at this location. Other hotels actively used by attendees were the Madison Concourse Hotel, Madison Hilton, Best Western Inn, and Doubletree in downtown Madison on or near the Capital square (10-20 minute walk from the Pyle Center). Two facilities operated by the University of Wisconsin Extension Program, the Lowell Inn (two buildings from the Pyle Center) and the J. F. Friedrich Inn (about a 15 minute walk to the Pyle Center along Lake Mendota) were also the conference homes of many attendees. Finally, a few people, mainly students, rented dorm rooms.

The academic setting of the Pyle Center and the convenience and reasonable rates at the hotels in Madison added to the enjoyment of attending the conference.
Finances

The meeting was financially successful in the sense that revenues of $301,706 exceeded expenses of $290,422. * We are very excited about exceeding the break-even point at the inaugural conference and are challenged to generate more funds at future conferences to cover more of our non-conference operating expenses.

*These amounts are subject to revision due to late arrival of certain receipts and expenses.
Respondents to the online post conference questionnaire gave the conference very high marks. People were asked to provide a 1-5 score on most of the questions, where 1 is the lowest ranking and 5 the highest. Respondents were not required to answer all questions so there is some variation among the questions.

We believe the response from the attendees suggests as high level of satisfaction with virtually every aspect of the conference. As pleased as we are with this, the officers and management of ASHE will work to further increase the quality of the next conference.

**Satisfaction with the review process**

Over 75% of respondents submitted abstracts for review. The overwhelming majority of respondents gave scores of 4 or 5 which correspond to the two highest ratings.
All respondents had to go through the registration process. Over half of all respondents gave the highest score possible.
How many papers would you consider optimal per session?

A strong preference was shown for sessions with 3 papers, with 79% of respondents preferring that option.
Satisfaction with chairing of sessions

Less than 1% of respondents did not attend any sessions. Almost 40% of respondents gave the chairing of sessions the highest score (5). An equal number of respondents gave the second highest score (4).
Satisfaction with the attendance at session

A bit over one-fifth of attendees tell us they did not present. While the satisfaction scores are still impressively high, 10% of respondents gave scores of 2 or less.
Satisfaction with discussants

Less than half of 1% of respondents to this question did not attend a session. Again we see very high scores with some signs of dissatisfaction among 12.2% of respondents.
Satisfaction with quality of papers

Less than 1% of respondents had no opinion. Over half of all respondents gave a score of 4, with over 80% of respondents giving a score of 4 or higher.
Satisfaction with pre-conference sessions

Over 80% of respondents did not attend pre-conference sessions, which makes it hard to distinguish the response rate of those who did attend. Over two-thirds of those who did attend gave scores of 4 or higher. Obviously the relatively low rate of pre-conference participation is an area where ASHE can work on.
This conference had 3 plenary sessions, would you like: Same, More or Fewer?

Less than 20% of respondents had no opinion on the number of plenary sessions at future sessions. Over half liked the number of plenary sessions and thought it should be kept at that level. A bit over one-fifth of respondents thought that there should be fewer plenaries. There was a small contingent which supported having more than 3 plenary sessions at future conferences.
A bit less than half of our respondents attended the Monona reception, but there was a high level of satisfaction among the attendees.
The Tuesday reception at the Union shows better attendance with only 37.6% of respondents reporting that they did not attend. Satisfaction levels are very high.
71% of respondents did not attend the Closing Reception. In spite of a tornado warning, the responses show a high level of satisfaction among attendees.
98.6% of respondents had an opinion about Lunches, Coffee & Refreshments during the conference. Over half of all respondents gave this category a rating of 5. Almost 80% of respondents gave the category a rating of 4 or higher. One concern raised was the need for more vegetarian options.
91.9% of respondents thought the length of the conference was just right. 7.7% felt the conference was too long. A very small contingent (1 person) thought the conference was too short.
Conference should start on which day of the week?

Given a choice on the day of the week that respondents preferred, over half chose Sunday. Just under one-fifth chose Monday. There was very little support for the middle of the week.
Given a choice for when in the year the conference should occur, over 85% of respondents said they preferred having the conference at the same time of year as the Madison Conference. The remainder were split over whether it was too late in the year or too early (with a slight advantage to the latter group in numbers).
Over 87% of respondents gave the conference a rating of 4 or higher which is very gratifying. Not everyone will have the same experience at an event, but one of our goals for the next conference will be to learn from our inaugural conference. We’d like to do our best to ensure no one has an experience which leads to rating the conference as a 1 or 2.