

Advisory Board Biographies

Michael W. Cropp, M.D., MBA, Chair, Center for Healthcare Economics and Policy Advisory Board, is the president and chief executive officer of Independent Health. Under his leadership, the organization delivers products and services that improve the health of almost 375,000 customers – and has been consistently recognized nationally for excellence in quality, service and innovation. His focus on building leadership capacity for sustainable accountable quality care reaches beyond Western New York as he serves in leadership roles on the boards of national health care organizations, including America’s Health Insurance Plans (AHIP). Dr. Cropp is also past chairman of the Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP). In addition, he has established several community initiatives to improve access, quality and affordability of health care. He is the founding chairman of the P2 Collaborative of Western New York – one of the original grantees in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q) grant. He is also the founding chairman of the Western New York Clinical Information Exchange (HEALTHeLINK), a consortium of multiple community stakeholders working to provide electronic access to health information across our entire community – a recipient of the government’s Beacon Community award.

Dr. Cropp’s approach of engaging physicians as partners, implementing initiatives with community-minded results, and focusing on customer-centric ideals have earned Independent Health both local and national recognition. For three consecutive years, Independent Health is the highest ranked health insurance plan in the New York/New Jersey region by J.D. Power and Associates Member Health Insurance Plan StudySM. The company has also maintained "Excellent" accreditation status with the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), an independent organization that evaluates health plans throughout the country. In 2009 and 2010, Independent Health was the highest rated health plan in the nation for customer service according to NCQA's Quality Compass[®].

Dr. Cropp received his bachelor’s and medical degrees from Brown University, and completed his residency in family practice at Memorial Hospital in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, which is affiliated with Brown University. In addition to his medical education and training, Dr. Cropp earned an M.B.A. from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

George J. Isham, M.D., MS, Member, Center for Healthcare Economics and Policy Advisory Board, is a Senior Fellow at the HealthPartners Institute and is involved in understanding how health is created in populations and how to improve health and health care quality and financing. From 2012 to 2018, he served as a senior advisor to the board of directors and the senior management team of HealthPartners, and from 1993 until 2012, Dr. Isham served as HealthPartners’ Medical Director and Chief Health Officer, reporting to the CEO, and responsible for quality of care and health and health care improvement.

Dr. Isham has been active in health policy, serving as a member of the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) Task Force on Community Preventive Services, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality’s United States Preventive Services Task Force, as a founding co-chair of National Committee for Quality Assurance’s committee on performance measurement as well as founding co-chair of the National Quality Forum’s Measurement Application Partnership. He is a founding member of the advisory board for the National Guideline Clearinghouse and has served on advisory board for the National Quality Measures Clearinghouse as well as the Advisory Committee to the Director of the CDC.

Dr. Isham is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) and was designated as a National Associate of the Institute of Medicine in 2003 recognition of his contribution to its work. He has chaired the National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine’s (NASEM) Roundtable on Population Health Improvement and the Roundtable on Health Literacy. He has chaired, served on and been a reviewer for a number of consensus committee reports, and participated in a number of National Academies’ workshops. His work at the National Academies has focused on quality of health care and public health.

Dr. Isham completed his bachelor of arts in zoology and master of science in preventive medicine/administrative medicine for the University of Wisconsin Madison and his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Illinois following which he completed his internship and residency in internal medicine, University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, Madison, WI.

Bill Purcell, JD, Member, Center for Healthcare Economics and Policy Advisory Board, is serving as Counsel in FrostBrownTodd's Government Services practice group. He has spent more than 30 years in law, public service, and higher education. During his eight-year tenure as Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee (1999-2007), the city saw unprecedented economic expansion, an increase in Metro school funding of more than 50 percent, and the development and preservation of more than 26,000 affordable housing units. He was elected to his second term as mayor by a record-setting 84.8 percent of the vote. During his term, Nashville was ranked as the number one city for corporate headquarters and twice ranked as the hottest city in America for expansion and relocation of business.

Bill was elected to five terms in the Tennessee House of Representatives (1986-96), serving as Majority Leader (1990-96). During his decade in the General Assembly he sponsored and passed legislation undertaking major reforms in Tennessee's schools, courtrooms, industrial plants and boardrooms, criminal and juvenile justice, hospitals, and voting booths. During his service Tennessee was twice ranked the best managed state in America.

Having represented clients in all of the trial courts of Nashville as well as the federal and state appellate courts, he has been focused on advising clients with administrative and policy concerns at the local level across Tennessee. An active participant in the work of the profession, Bill has been honored by the Nashville Bar Association with the John C. Tune award for outstanding contributions to his community and faithful service to the bar. He earned his bachelor's degree at Hamilton College and his law degree at Vanderbilt University School of Law, where he was honored as the 2004 Distinguished Alumnus.

W. David Helms, Ph.D., is a Member of the Center for Healthcare Economics and Policy Advisory Board and the National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation Board of Directors. From 2012, Dr. Helms has served as a senior associate at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health where he teaches a course on state health care policy. From 2000-2011, he was president and CEO of AcademyHealth — the national professional society for the fields of health services research and health policy. Dr. Helms' career has focused on advancing health care improvements through planning, program analysis and development of new initiatives to expand coverage for the uninsured. He received his Ph.D. in public administration and economics from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University and his bachelor's degree in political science from Colorado College.