



Carol Backstrom

Vice President,
Medicaid Policy

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Carol Backstrom joined Harbage Consulting in November 2016 and serves as Vice President of Medicaid Policy. In this role, she is a member of the firm's senior leadership team and is responsible for leading and managing all aspects of the Medicaid Policy portfolio. Carol leads client work, manages staff associated with individual projects, and ensures the delivery of high quality work products and overall client satisfaction.

Carol has an extensive background in health care policy, administration, and project management in the public and private sectors. Prior to coming to Harbage Consulting, Carol was the director of the Intergovernmental and External Affairs Group (IEAG) for the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Carol led CMCS' interactions with state and local governments and external stakeholders including consumer groups, health policy researchers, the healthcare provider community, and philanthropic organizations. She also served as a Senior Policy Advisor for Payment Reform at CMCS, where she provided strategic leadership, project, and technical direction on Medicaid payment and delivery system initiatives to the CMS Deputy Administrator. In this role, Carol led workgroups comprised of federal and state officials that explored Medicaid payment reform initiatives and statutory and regulatory pathways for implementation of delivery system reform models.

Carol served as the State Medicaid Director at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, where she managed state, federal, political, public/private sector relationships needed to carry out the agency's core mission of providing health care coverage for low-income Minnesotans.

Previously, Carol was the Assistant to the Commissioner for Health Reform at the Minnesota Department of Health under the Pawlenty administration. Her role there was to oversee the successful implementation for Minnesota's nation-leading health reform efforts, which included a statewide, multi-payer approach for medical homes, a statewide quality measurement and reporting system, a provider peer grouping system, a \$47 million Statewide Health Improvement Program, and episode-based packages of care.

In addition to her state and federal experience, Carol was a Program Director for Medicaid and Health System Transformation at the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, providing direction and policy advice to states on delivery system reform. In this role, she provided technical assistance to states focusing on creating infrastructure to support the delivery of high quality, comprehensive care for super-utilizers.

Carol started her health policy career at HealthPartners, a large integrated health care system based in Minneapolis, Minnesota as Senior Manager for Care Innovation as well as Manager of Government Relations and Community Health Initiatives, focusing on issues related to government program benefits and eligibility, medical education, and uncompensated care.

Carol has a Master's degree in health care administration from the University of Minnesota and a Bachelor's degree in English from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin.

At the intersection of health care policy, politics and communications.