Without the spin

Dr. Josh Michaud, Associate Director of the Global Health Policy Program at the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, describes the crucial role the Program and Foundation play in providing the US with non-partisan health information.

The objectives of the Global Health Policy Program at the Kaiser Family Foundation mirror those of the Foundation as a whole: to serve as a source of non-partisan, independent information and analysis about health policy issues that are important to people’s lives. However, we achieve this through the scope of analysing and disseminating helpful information about global health policy issues.

In particular, we focus on how the US Government engages in global health and how it supports different programmes. We take a look at those efforts from a number of different angles and provide neutral information about it to policy makers, the public, academics and the media. Our role is important – it is different from a think tank because we do not have a particular angle or ask for investment.

Reports and analysis on different topics that are timely and address information gaps. For example, the Program provides reports on topics ranging from the global health activities of the Department of Defense, to the latest changes in global health leadership and architecture, while explaining what it means for diplomacy.

GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY PROGRAM

We also undertake opinion polling of the US public, striving to uncover its thoughts on global health issues and the US’s engagement in this area. Within this, we ask basic questions, and we track those questions over time to see if there are any changes in the public’s perception of global health.

Finally, the Global Health Policy Program holds events and convenes small, closed-door sessions on very current topics, and larger events as well. For example, we recently held a large public event with Dr. Tom Frieden, the Director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to talk about where the US stands with Ebola, enabling people to directly ask questions on the topic.

REMOVING THE BIAS

Essentially, every activity the Program undertakes has a basis of advancing our role as non-partisan source of information – a role I believe we are fulfilling quite well, as we are often called to give briefings, presentations and testimonies to Congress, staff members and the media. Anyone who is interested in the services we provide or in diving deeper into our work can visit http://kff.org/.

Dr. Josh Michaud is an authority on a range of global health policy issues such as financing, the role of the Department of Defense and other US agencies in global health, health security and emerging diseases. He holds a PhD in International Health Policy from Johns Hopkins SAIS, an MA in Applied Economics from Johns Hopkins University, and an MHS in Epidemiology from the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.