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Dean Mike Mazzeo, Hal Barron, Erin Scott and Bobby Sandage

Message from Managing Director

The past two months have seen major changes in the landscape for pharmacy benefits, Affordable Care Act premiums, and the regulatory structures that govern the artificial intelligence ecosystem. These shifts show the unique tensions caused by competing incentives and complex patient needs. Addressing them requires leaders across business, clinical care, policy, and technology to work together to design structures that produce better outcomes. That challenge is central to the work we are building at Olin.

On March 31, we will host our annual [Spring Symposium](#), focused this year on *The Business of Being Well*. The symposium will

explore how business levers can be used not only to treat disease, but to actively promote wellness. Moving beyond headlines, Olin faculty, students, alumni, and community partners will share the concrete work they are doing to promote well-being for individuals and communities.

Keynote speaker **Brian Whorley, Founder and CEO of Paytient (MBA '21)**, will headline the day by describing “*How Smarter Markets Can Keep People Healthy.*” Whorley will share fresh insights on how organizations can rethink out-of-pocket health costs while building impactful partnerships that strengthen healthier communities.

Throughout the day, we will have interactive breakout sessions, faculty presentations, and opportunities to connect with leaders working across sectors to improve health.

Whether you are a healthcare consumer, provider, or leader, I am confident that the day will offer useful insights and engaging conversations. I hope to see you there!

[Register Here](#)

Patrick Aguilar, MD, MBA
Managing Director, Health Initiative
Professor of Practice, Organizational Behavior

One Year In

The Business of Health at Olin Business School has rapidly scaled into a full ecosystem of classes, programs, and partnerships aimed at educating future health leaders and driving innovation across the St. Louis region. The latest issue of Olin Business School magazine takes stock of the initiative's first year, highlighting key milestones. *Read the full story in [Olin Business School magazine](#).*

Happenings with the Business of Health

Health Decoded

On January 29th, the Business of Health Program welcomed Parkland Health's Chief Quality and Safety Officer and Associate Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Michael Lane, for the first Health Decoded event of 2026! Dr. Michael Lane spoke about the effects of creating value and measuring quality metrics from his unique perspective at Parkland Health, one of the largest safety-net hospitals in the United States.





Last week, Fred Bendaña of Evernorth Health Services joined Patrick Aguilar for a case discussion. Together, they explored how, over 6 years, the Evernorth team developed an innovative digital health system that also improved member experience. They did this while also adjusting to an ever-changing digital landscape. Students and community members then engaged in a discussion about the role of PBMs and how health services can impact the industry.

Our next Health Decoded will take place on March 19th, from 5:30-7:00 PM in Bauer Hall Room 330 (1 Snow Way Dr, St. Louis, MO 63130), Health Decoded will feature Nivine Woods, Strategic Advisor & Former Fortune 100 Executive, for a conversation titled: "From Insight to Innovation: Winning in MedTech and Pharma". [RSVP HERE.](#)

Conference on the Economics and Finance of Healthcare and Medicine

On February 23rd, Olin Business School's Wells Fargo Advisors Center for Finance and Accounting Research (WFA-CFAR) brought together leading scholars from across the country for its 2nd Annual Conference on the Economics and Finance of Healthcare and Medicine. The event featured eight cutting-edge research presentations spanning some of healthcare's most pressing financial and policy challenges.

[This year's program](#) covered a remarkable breadth of topics — from how individual negotiation skills shape hospital pricing and how clinical trial embargos influence medical literature, to the downstream economic effects of private equity hospital buyouts and the relationship between youth mental health and financial distress in adulthood. Presenters and discussants hail from many of the nation's top research institutions, reflecting the conference's growing reputation as a destination for top healthcare economics research.

Course Spotlights

Drugs and Devices

Earlier this Semester, 50+ students gathered for the first-ever "Drugs and Devices" course taught at Olin Business School. The 1.5 credit class consisted of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in disciplines ranging from business to medicine to biomedical engineering. Throughout the course, taught by Dr. Patrick Aguilar, students were exposed to the various market and non-market factors that impact the success of product offerings by pharmaceutical and medical device companies, including regulatory processes, venture capital funding, sales processes, and much more!

Undergraduate Biomedical Engineering student Cora Johnson stated that:

"Drugs and Devices was a transformative experience. I have worked in biotech for the past three years and was not aware of all the processes involved in taking a drug or device from idea to implementation. This is one of the most interesting classes that I have taken in my time at WashU, and I highly recommend it to anyone working in the medical or biotech industries."

Management Communication

Students in the Management Communication course (MGMT 2010) recently partnered with [the CHEST Study](#) and [Dr. James Krings](#) to tackle real-world health communication challenges. Half of the student teams developed messaging strategies tailored to healthcare providers about the single-inhaler option for asthma management, while the other teams focused on crafting clear and compelling direct-to-patient communication. One student's response to the project was:

"It was incredible to be able to work with the CHEST Study for MGT 2010. I truly enjoyed knowing that our work could have a real-world impact."

Senior Lecturer, [Dr. Rebecca Dohrman](#), noted how energizing it was to watch students' insights come together in their final presentations, highlighting the value of bridging business communication skills with pressing public health needs.

Vogel Family Business of Health Fellowship

Thanks to the generous support of Scott Vogel, BSBA '97, and the Vogel Family, we're excited to announce that applications are now open for the Vogel Family Business of Health Fellowship, a competitive, fully supported program for Olin students passionate about transforming health through business.

The Fellowship is designed for outstanding students committed to shaping the future of health. Fellows engage with leading experts, participate in dedicated Fellowship Seminars and Business of Health events each semester, and showcase their work at the annual BOH Spring Symposium. Along the way, they build lasting professional relationships with peers, faculty, and alumni who share a commitment to improving the well-being of individuals and societies.

Fellows choose between two specialized tracks: **Health Operations & Strategy**, focused on strategic and operational leadership in existing health firms, and **Health Innovation**, which emphasizes entrepreneurship, risk capital, and biotechnology. Each fellow receives up to \$3,000 in financial support for conferences, educational materials, and professional memberships, as well as priority registration for Business of Health courses.

The program will admit five new fellows per year and is open to students in the Full-Time MBA program, with select Flex MBA and BSBA students also considered.

Visit the [fellowship website](#) to learn more and apply. Fellows will be announced in early June 2026. Reach out to Griffin Knipp at knipp@wustl.edu with any questions.

Publications and Scholars in the News:

[Why is US health care still the most expensive in the world after decades of cost-cutting initiatives?](#), The Conversation

[The Fiscal Impact of the Medicare Secondary Payer Act for End-Stage Renal Disease](#), Journal of the American Society of Nephrology

[Contemporary Patterns in Out-of-Sequence Liver Allocation](#), American Journal of Transplantation

[Consumers Believe Legal Products Are Less Effective than Illegal Products](#), Journal of Marketing Research

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