



Keynote Speaker:
Avik Roy, an American conservative commentator and activist

Avik was born to Indian immigrants in Rochester, Michigan. He finished high school in San Antonio, Texas, where USA Today named him to its All-USA High School Academic First Team, honoring the top 20 seniors in the country. He trained as a scientist at MIT and as a physician at Yale Medical School.

In 2009, as President Obama's health reform bill was being debated in Congress, Avik started a blog about health care policy. "I couldn't find anything to read that I agreed with, so I started writing it myself." Avik's blog, *The Apothecary*, was soon picked up by Reihan Salam at *National Review*, and Matt Herper at *Forbes*. In 2012, Avik joined Mitt Romney's presidential campaign as a health care policy advisor. By 2014, Avik was *Forbes*' Opinion Editor, and *Meet the Press*' Chuck Todd was calling Avik "the go-to policy wonk critic of the health care law...the guru."

But Avik wasn't content merely to criticize the Affordable Care Act. He's a passionate believer in the free-market case for universal coverage: the idea that choice and competition can bring quality health care to every American. His health reform plan, *Medicare Advantage for All: A Patient-Centered Plan for Universal Coverage and Permanent Fiscal Solvency*, is one of FREOPP's flagship publications.

In 2015, Avik he moved to Austin, where he ran the foreign and domestic policy shops for Texas Governor Rick Perry's presidential campaign. In that capacity, Avik was also the lead author of Gov. Perry's major policy speeches. *The Wall Street Journal* called Perry's address on intergenerational black poverty "the speech of the campaign so far." Later in the primaries, Avik advised Florida Senator Marco Rubio.

2016's political outcomes convinced Avik that the same-old, same-old wasn't working. "Both parties are failing to work for people who are struggling in the twenty-first century economy," says Avik, FREOPP's President. "That's why FREOPP focuses exclusively on research that moves the needle for people with below-median incomes or net worth."

Avik's work on prescription drug costs, including *The Competition Prescription: A Market-Based Plan for Affordable Drugs* and *What Medicare Can Learn From Other Countries on Drug Pricing*, has been a key source of ideas for Congress, and has heavily influenced the prescription drug reform agenda advanced by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar.

Avik's paper on reducing hospital prices, *Affordable Hospital Care Through Competition and Price Transparency*, was turned into a bill by Indiana Rep. Jim Banks called the Hospital Competition Act of 2019. Another bill, Rep. Bruce Westerman's Fair Care Act of 2020, embodies the broad range of ideas in the Medicare Advantage for All initiative.