



PH 101: Health Policy & Ethics in Public Health

Presented by:
The California-Nevada
Public Health Training Center

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Learning Objectives

After this tutorial you will be able to...

1. Define health policy and its purpose
2. Identify various health policy settings
3. Describe the policy making process
4. Identify the basic ethical principles of public health

Health Policy

- Health policy is “A set course of action (or inaction) undertaken by governments or health care organizations to obtain a desired health outcome” (Abood, 2007)

Introduction

- Where do we see health policy?
 - Ingredient label for most foods
 - Result of 1990 Nutrition Labeling and Education Act
 - Tobacco-free environments
 - Result of no-smoking policies

The Need for Health Policy

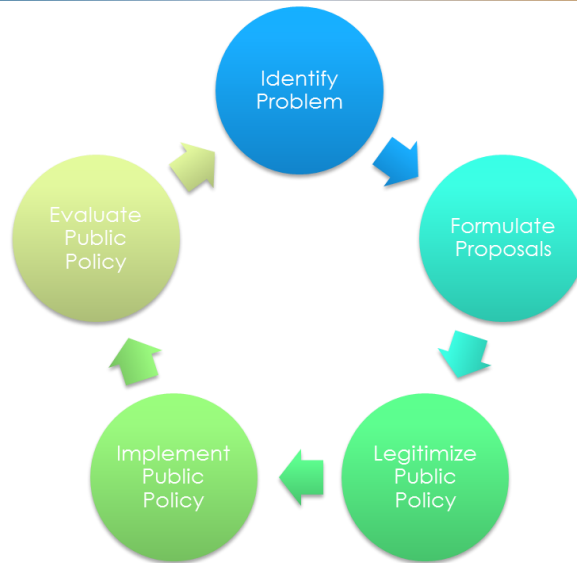
- Policy sustains health systems through the following:
 - Define a long-term vision
 - Establish short- and medium- term targets and reference points
 - Identify responsibilities and priorities of different groups
 - Build group consensus
 - Inform people

Health Policy Settings

Educational & Research Institutions	Medical Suppliers	Insurance Companies	Healthcare Providers	Payers	Government Agencies involved with:
Medical & dental schools	Pharmaceutical companies	Commercial insurers	Clinics	Third party administrators	Health regulations
Nursing & physician assistant programs	Biotechnology companies	Managed care plans	Community health centers	Employers	Public health
Research Organizations		Medicaid	Hospitals	State agencies	Public insurance financing
Private foundations		Medicare	Managed care organizations		Research funding
Professional associations		VA	Nursing homes		
US Public Health Service			Preventive care health departments		

Adapted from Shi, L., & Singh, D. A. (2012).

Policy Making Process



Who creates health policies?

- Legislative
 - Federal & state
- Local agencies
 - Executive branch – responsible for implementing policy at various levels
- Policy expressed through following examples:
 - Contractual agreements
 - Enforcement actions
 - Manuals
 - Proposal requests
 - Rules and regulations

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

- Principal agency/ department of the United States government for implementing health policies
 - 8 public health service agencies
 - Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality (AHRQ)
 - Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ATSDR)
 - Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)
 - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
 - Food & Drug Administration (FDA)
 - Indian Health Service (IHS)
 - National Institutes of Health (NIH)
 - Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
 - 3 human service agencies
 - Administration for Children & Families (ACF)
 - Administration for Community Living (ACL)
 - Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)

What Helps Shape Policy?

CONTEXT (systematic factors)	PROCESS	ACTORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural • Economic • National, international • Political (i.e.: national mood, public opinion, change in administration) • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How policies are initiated, developed, negotiated, communicated, implemented, and evaluated • Negotiating to reach common ground and satisfy various actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations • Individuals • Government entities

Political Reality

What we often fail to realize...

Special interests	Politics	Greed
Strong Driving Factors		

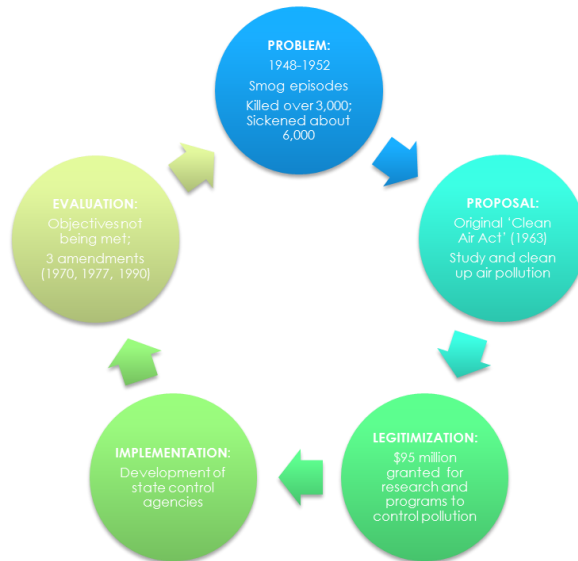
We want to believe that sufficient data and quality data, when accurately presented, will “speak for itself”...yet this is rarely the case.

Truth is not always self-evident and it is often perception that has the real power.

How public professionals influence policy

- Formulation Phase
 - Provide input of research and ideas
- Evaluation and Modification Phase
 - Lobby policy makers regarding health policy changes being considered
- Other courses of action can include:
 - Testifying about the problem
 - Working with media
 - Take great care in presentation of findings

Example of Public Health Policy



Ethics in Public Health and Health Policy

- Ethics
 - What choices should be made, and why?
 - Considers morals and norms of what guide decisions and actions
- What are public health ethics?
 - Ethical principles that guide public health decision-making process

Purpose of Public Health Ethics

- Provide a framework to address ethical tensions in public health
- Public health focuses on population-level health
 - Different ethics issues than in clinical medicine

Basic Ethical Principles

- Belmont Report (1979)
- Respect for persons
 - Autonomy
 - Protection of those with diminished autonomy
- Beneficence and non-maleficence
 - “Do no harm”
 - Maximize benefits, minimize harms
- Justice
 - Fair distribution of burdens & benefits

Challenges of Public Health Ethics

- Resource allocation
- Control of infectious diseases
- Collection and use of data
- Balancing individual choices while protecting the public good

Benefits of Public Health Ethics

- Clarify purpose/"ideals" of public health institutions to communities
- Provide goals and standardization
- Provide a framework to resolve ethical conflicts
- Increase transparency and accountability
- Clarify and justify course of action

Principles of Ethical Practice of Public Health

1. Address the fundamental causes of disease and requirements for health.
2. Respect the rights of individuals in the community.
3. Ensure an opportunity for input from community members.

Principles of Ethical Practice of Public Health cont.

4. Advocate for the empowerment of disenfranchised community members; health access for all.
5. Seek information to implement effective policies and programs that protect and promote health.
6. Obtain community's consent before implementing policies or programs

Principles of Ethical Practice of Public Health cont.

7. Act in a timely manner on information.
8. Incorporate a variety of approaches that anticipate and respect community and cultural diversity.
9. Implement policies and programs in a manner that creates the most benefit for the physical and social environment.

Principles of Ethical Practice of Public Health cont.

10. Protect confidentiality.
11. Ensure professional competence of public health employees.
12. Engage in collaborations and affiliations to build the public's trust and the institution's effectiveness.

Conclusion

- Public health ethics important throughout public health practice
- Guidelines instead of specific recommendations
- Community should shape public health policy