

**CHS/HS M287:
Health Policy: What Is It?**

I. What is health policy? - ERB

- A. Beaufort Longest: “*Public policies* are authoritative decisions made in the legislative, executive, or judicial branches of government intended to direct or influence the actions, behaviors, or decisions of others. When public policies pertain to or influence our pursuit of health, they become *health policies.*”**
- B. Institute of Medicine report on “The Future of Public Health” argued that one of public health’s most critical missions is “to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy.”**
- C. “Healthy Public Policy” (Nancy Milio)**
1. Creating positive environmental influences on population’s health through government action
 - a. “Public policy [is] a prime approach to creating the conditons and relations that can nurture health.”
 - b. Policies that “make healthful choices easy (less costly in various ways) and damaging choices difficult” (more costly in various ways) to the chooser, whether a corporate body or individual.

II. What forms does policy take? And what bodies make policy? - SPW

- A. If we want to look for (or advocate) policies that affect health or health care, what kinds of things would we look for (or advocate)?**
1. statutes/laws and programs (including budgets)
 2. rules/regulations
 3. judicial decisions
 4. macro policies (setting framework within which other policies get made — e.g., balanced budget, global budget, etc.)
- B. At what levels and in what kinds of government units should we look for (or advocate) any of these policies?**
1. federal
 - a. Congress (House, Senate): statutes/laws and programs (including budgets/taxes):

- b. Executive Branch: rules/regulations, implementation of policy, legislation (signature or veto)
- c. Courts: judicial decisions
- 2. state
 - a. Legislature (Assembly, Senate): statutes/laws and programs (including budgets/taxes):
 - b. Executive Branch: rules/regulations, implementation of policy, legislation (signature or veto)
 - c. Courts: judicial decisions
- 3. local (County)
 - a. Bd of Supv: laws (ordinances) and programs (including budgets/taxes), rules/regulations, implementation of policy
 - b. Courts: judicial decisions
- 4. local (City, school district)
 - a. Legislature (City Council): statutes/laws and programs (including budgets/taxes):
 - b. Executive Branch (Mayor): rules/regulations, implementation of policy, legislation (signature or veto)

C. Public Policy Includes Funding for Health Programs (Allocative or distributive policies) - ERB

- 1. The 104th Congress (Gingrich Congress in 1995-1996) terminated entitlement to:
 - a. Medicaid (except for emergencies) for most legal immigrants entering US after August 22, 1996
 - (1) Ineligible for at least 5 years
 - (2) "Deeming" likely to make nearly all ineligible for at least next 5 years
 - b. Food Stamps
 - (1) cut funding for all beneficiaries
 - (2) terminated entitlement for most legal immigrants until citizenship
 - c. Replaced entitlement to public assistance for children and families (AFDC) with block grants to states (TANF)
 - d. Increased funding for NIH
- 2. The 105th Congress expanded health insurance coverage:
 - a. Created state option for expansion of Medicaid eligibility for children and/or private health insurance coverage for children
 - b. California implemented by enacting legislation to:
 - (1) Slightly expand Medi-Cal for children
 - (2) Create new private health insurance program for children

D. Public Policy Affects Behavior through Education and Police Powers - SPW

1. Influences health-related behaviors through education and/or regulates behaviors through police powers
 - a. Informing and educating public about risks of certain behaviors and value of changing behaviors
 - b. Prescribing or proscribing behaviors and providing penalties, such as fine or jail time, for violation (Regulatory)
2. Affects personal and organizational behaviors
 - a. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is regulating minors' access to tobacco
 - b. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposing new standards to comply with Clean Air Act requirements

E. Public Policy Affects Behavior and Health by Shaping Incentives and Environment - ERB

1. Affects behaviors or actions by shaping incentives and/or other forces that influence behaviors
2. Financial incentives (reduce demand with taxes or increase demand with subsidies)
 - a. Tobacco taxes reduce smoking initiation by minors
3. Social incentives (change social norms)
 - a. Promote alternatives to gun violence for youth
 - b. Promote negative image of smoking
4. Intrinsic incentives (link behaviors to personal values)
 - a. Education about effects of risk behaviors on health or other valued goals

F. Public Policy Affects Broader Environment that Affects Health - SPW

1. Affects broader social, economic and physical environment that, in turn, affects health
2. Federal Reserve Bank sets interest rates
 - a. Affects economic investment and consumption
 - b. Affects employment
 - c. Employment affects physical and mental health

G. California Healthline suggested three "health policy" issues at the federal level to watch in the coming year: health insurance, Medicare prescription drugs, and HMO patients' bill of rights.

1. What might be missing from that list? (economic policy, bioterrorism, other?)

III. Policy process not policy analysis - ERB

- A. This class is the study of how the policy process works and how to work effectively in it**
- B. Different from policy analysis**

IV. Stages of health policy making process (rational model of the process; not exactly the way the process actually works) - SPW

- A. If you want to establish a new health policy or change existing health policy, what things do you have to do?**
 - B. Get the issue on the political agenda (“agenda setting”)**
 - 1. Get problem recognized as issue (Mills: “turn personal problem into social issue”)
 - 2. Articulate policy objectives
 - 3. Evaluate political conditions
 - 4. Decide appropriate form of policy and levels
 - C. Develop/Promote possible solutions**
 - D. Get policy (solution) adopted**
 - E. Get policy implemented**
 - F. Perhaps modify existing policy**
- V. During quarter, we’ll also examine other models, including “garbage can” model (Kingdon) – ERB**
- A. Wrap up**