

Health Care Policy
34:833:580
Graduate Program in Public Policy
Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
Rutgers, the State University
Fall, 2006
Thursdays, 9:50 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Room 170, Civic Square Building

Overview

This course provides an overview of health care policy in the US and a close examination of selected current policy issues. Selected policy examples are drawn from the experiences of New Jersey. In addition, because health policy is complex and issues of concern change over time, the course aims to provide students with an understanding of sources of analysis and information on current health policy issues and to impart critical analysis skills in using those materials. The class combines discussion of current health policy literature, lectures, guest speakers, written assignments, student presentations, and an examination.

Course Requirements

Attendance and class participation are a vital part of the course. Students are evaluated based on their participation and written and oral presentation assignments. Course assignments are as follows (more details will be provided in class):

Policy Memorandum and Briefing: Each student will prepare written and oral discussions of a significant current health policy problem (topics to be assigned), including documentation of the policy problem/issue, review of current policy, development of two or more policy options/solutions, and support for a recommended policy approach. The assignment has three parts:

Part 1: Background & Current Practice. Prepare a 10 page (double spaced, 12 point type, min. 1" margins) memorandum to a hypothetical policymaker or policy stakeholder. Select the policymaker "target audience" (e.g., the governor, commissioner of health, and policy committee of the state medical society, etc.). Regardless of the audience selected, the paper should assume that the primary audience for this memo is consists of time-constrained senior executives/officials with little expertise on the assigned topic. The memo is to describe the nature of the problem/issue, document why it is of public policy concern, and describe current policy. A reference list/bibliography is required (not part of page limit), with at least *three* citations from peer-reviewed journals. Grades will be based on the quality and clarity of the writing, the thoroughness and relevance of the background research, and the clarity and relevance of your arguments/discussion. As well, the balance, relevance and completeness of the references cited will be considered in assigning the grade. The page limit is binding and quite constraining, so all material included must be necessary, relevant, and concisely stated.

Part 2: Revise Background/Current Practice and add a Policy Options & Recommendation. In this portion of the assignment includes a revised and Background and Current Practice section and a Policy Options and Recommendation section. The revised Background and Current Practice section must adhere to the guidelines (length, etc.) outlined above and changes should be responsive to comments that will be provided. In addition, this version of the memo is to include a description of at least two policy options. For each option, pros and cons should be concisely discussed. Formal cost estimates of the options are not required, but the papers sure address the relative

difference in resource needs and how the fiscal impact of the policy will be distributed (e.g., discuss "fairness" of the distribution of costs). Conclude with a single recommended option and provide a rationale for that recommendation. The options section must adhere to the same style guidelines discussed above, and not exceed an additional six pages. Grading of this part of the assignment will use the same criteria discussed above, and will reflect both the revised Background/Current Practice and the Options/Recommendation sections.

Part 3: Briefing. In addition to the written memorandum, each student will give an oral briefing on his/her project to the class. Student policy memos will be distributed to the entire class the week before the presentation and students are expected to read one another's papers prior to the oral briefings. The oral presentations may not exceed **10 minutes** and use of PowerPoint or similar materials is recommended (8 to 10 slide maximum). The following tutorial on preparing graphics for presentations is helpful: http://www.kaiseredu.org/tutorials/effective_graphics/alantutorial_updatedbuttons.html. The oral briefing will be followed by Q&A with class. Students may submit their draft presentation materials to for review in advance (see schedule below). Presentations will be graded on the same criteria as the paper, with an emphasis on the depth of understanding of the issue/options and the clarity, succinctness, and relevance with which information is presented.

More Suggestions for the Memo: Short-format memo writing is a challenging but essential part of public policy work. You must include all important information, avoid extraneous information, not use jargon, and write very clearly and parsimoniously. Unlike other forms of expository writing, bulleted lists and summary statements are encouraged. Do not be excessively adjectival - the memo is not an emotional appeal or poetry, it is to be informative in support someone else's decision making. Two web sites provide useful general (i.e., not specific to this assignment) style advice for policy memos: <http://wilcoxen.cp.maxwell.syr.edu/pages/275.html> and <http://www.acs.brockport.edu/~gsaxton/memos.htm>.

Discussion Assignments: Over the course of the term, students will be asked to be prepared to discuss specific issues (outlined below). These will be evaluated as part of the portion of the grade for general class discussion.

During Session 6, the class will have a brief discussion of web sites found during research for the policy memo assignment. Identify two web pages (whether or not you cited them in your assignment) that address the topic you selected for your Policy Memo and Briefing. Be prepared to discuss the sponsorship, point of view, and value for your research of these sites. Students are encouraged to select web sites that they feel misrepresent themselves or our otherwise misleading.

During Session 8, the class will have a brief discussion of policy options for addressing racial and ethnic health disparities. More information will be provided during Session 7.

Final Exam: A short essay, in-class exam covering required reading and in-class material for the entire course.

Due Dates for Assignments

Assignments	Date Due
Part 1: Policy Memo. Background/Current Practice including references	October 12
Part 2: Policy Memo. Revised Background/Current Practice and Options	October 26
In-Class Disparities Policy Exercise	October 26
Optional: Draft oral briefing materials (e.g., PowerPoint)	November 2
Part 3: Oral Briefing	November 16
Web Site Critique	November 30
Final Exam1	December 21

Grading, Participation, and Academic Integrity

Grading will be based on 100 points total, with points allocated as follows:

Point Allocation	Assignment
20	Part 1: Policy Memo. Background/Current Practice/Bibliography.
20	Part 2: Policy Memo. Revised Background/Current Practice and Options/Recommendation.
10	Part 3: Oral Briefing.
20	Attendance and General Class Participation
30	Final Exam

10% of points will be deducted from assignments received after the due date (up to midnight if delivered electronically) and assignments more than five days late will not be graded (and zero points will be assigned). If you need a special accommodation because of illness or disability please arrange these as far before the due date as possible.

Attendance and active participation are critical parts of the course experience. Excuses for missing classes will not be accepted. Participation will be evaluated based on attendance, the extent to which students' exhibit evidence that they have completed assigned reading prior to class, and the degree to which students engage in class discussion.

Grades will be assigned based on total points at the end of the term as follows: A: 94-100; B+: 87-93; B: 80-86; C+: 75-79; C: 70-74; and 69 or below is a failing grade.

University regulations regarding plagiarism and academic integrity will be adhered to strictly. Plagiarism will lead to the assignment of an F for the course and possibly other sanctions. I strongly urge you to review the University guidelines at <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>.

Office Hours – By Appointment

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Reading

Required readings are listed for under session below. Most will be made available via a password protected class web page. Two supplemental texts (listed below) may be helpful to students with no background in health care (Kovner and Jonas) or public policy (Van Horn, et al.). These texts are not required.

Kovner A & S Jonas, Eds., *Health Care Delivery in the U.S.*, 8th Ed. New York: Springer, 2005. (7th edition is also acceptable).

Van Horn CE, DC Baumer & WT Gormley, *Politics and Public Policy*. 3rd Ed, Washington DC: CQ Press. 2001.

Session 1: Course Introduction & Public Policy, Role of Government, and the US Health Care System (9/7)

- Course overview and requirements
- Definitions of public policy, health, health care, and health care policy
- Roles of federal, state, and local government in health care
- Sources and uses of dollars in the US health care system

Required reading:

Christine Borger, Sheila Smith, Christopher Tuffer, et al. "Health Spending Projections though 2015: Changes on the Horizon," *Health Affairs*, February 2006; Web Exclusive w61-w73.

Daniel M. Fox and Paul Fronstin. "Public Health Spending for Health Care Approaches 60 Percent," Letter, *Health Affairs*, March 2000. 271-273.

Robert J. Blendon, Mollyann Brodie, Drew E. Altman, et al. "Voters and Health Care in the 2004 Election," *Health Affairs*, March 2005; Web Exclusive w5.86-w5.96.

Session 2: Public Health Care Financing - I: Public Programs for Low Income Populations (9/14)

- Medicaid
- State Children's Health Insurance Program
- Direct delivery public health services programs

Required reading:

Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, *Medicaid: A Primer*, Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, July 2005.

Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, *Deficit Reduction Act of 2005: Implications for Medicaid*, Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, February 2006.

Dina Belloff and M. Susan Marquis, *Full-Cost Buy-In Options for Optimizing Coverage through NJ FamilyCare*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, April 2006.

Vern K. Smith and David M. Rousseau, *SCHIP Enrollment in 50 States: December 2004 Data Update*, Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, September 2005.

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, *Primer on the Health Care Safety Net*, Washington DC: National Governors Association. October 25, 2000.

Session 3: Public Health Care Financing - II: Medicare (and Discussion of Health Policy Research) (9/21)

- History and overview of Medicare
- Medicare payment policy
- Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA)
- Health Policy Research

Policy Memorandum Topic Selection Deadline

Assign Web Critique Exercise

Required reading:

Kaiser Family Foundation, *Medicare at a Glance Fact Sheet*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, July 2006.

Kaiser Family Foundation, *Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Fact Sheet*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, June 2006.

Kaiser Family Foundation, *Medicare Spending and Financing Fact Sheet*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, April 2005.

Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, *Dual Eligibles and Medicare Part D*, Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, May 2006.

Nancy E. Morden and Louis P. Garrison. "Implications of Part D for Mentally Ill Dual Eligibles: A Challenge for Medicare," *Health Affairs*, March 2006; 25(2):491-419.

William J. Scanlon. "The Future of Medicare Hospital Payment," *Health Affairs*, January 2006; 25(1):70-80.

Karen Milgate and Sharon Bee Cheng. "Pay-for-Performance: The MedPAC Perspective," *Health Affairs*, March 2006; 25(2):413-419.

Robert Pear, "Bush Administration Plans Medicare Payment Changes," *New York Times*, July, 17 2006. p.13.

Robert Pear, "White House Alters Plan to Make Large cuts in Hospitals' Medicare Payments," *New York Times*, August 3, 2006. p.14.

Reference materials on Health Policy Research & Web Critique:

Donatiello J. *How to do a Literature Search*. Unpublished Mimeograph, New Brunswick: Center for State Health Policy, Rutgers University. September 8, 2003.

Donatiello J. The Best Social Science Web Sites: Health Policy. *Presentation to the Special Libraries Association Annual Meeting*, New York, NY. June 9, 2003.
<http://www.cshp.rutgers.edu/presentations/SLApresentation.pdf> (PowerPoint presentation)
 NOTE: Web link only, not available on class web site.

Mardikian J. *Evaluating Health Related Web Sites*. Web Page. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Libraries.
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/rr_gateway/research_guides/health/health_eval.shtml
 NOTE: Web link only, not available on class web site.

Session 4: Public Health Care Financing - II: Policy Innovation and Federal Medicaid Waivers (9/28)

- The rise of Medicaid waivers under Bill Clinton and George W. Bush
- States as policy laboratories via waivers?
- Waivers and democratic process

Guest Speaker: Professor Frank Thompson
 Professor of Public Administration, Policy, and Political Science at
 University at Albany, SUNY, and
 Visiting Fellow, Rutgers Center for State Health Policy

Required reading:

Teresa A. Coughlin, Sharon K. Long, John A. Graves, and Alshadye Yemane. "An Early Look At Ten State HIFA Medicaid Waivers," *Health Affairs* Web Exclusive, May 2006; 25(3): w204-w216.

Frank J. Thompson and James W. Fossett, "Federalism and Health Care Policy: Politics and Devolution," in James Morone (ed.) [Health Policy in American](#) (forthcoming).

Session 5: Private Health Insurance and the Uninsured - I (10/5)

- Current status and trends in private health insurance and the uninsured
- Forces underlying the trends
- Is insurance coverage important (don't the uninsured have access anyway)?

Required reading:

Chapters I and II in Patricia A. Butler. *ERISA Preemption Primer*. Washington DC: AcademyHealth. January 2000.

Patricia A. Butler. "ERISA Update: the Supreme Court Texas Decision and Other Recent Developments." *State Coverage initiatives Issue Brief*. Washington DC: AcademyHealth, August 2004.

Sherry Glied, Jeanne M. Lambrew and Sarah Little. *The Growing Share of Uninsured Workers Employed by Large Firms*. New York: The Commonwealth Fund. October 2003.

Matthew Dolan, Stephanie Desmon and Andrea K. Walker. "Court voids 'Wal-Mart law' U.S. district judge says Md. violated federal authority." Baltimore MD: The Baltimore Sun. July 20, 2006. p.1A.

Kaiser Family Foundation & Health Research and Education Trust. *Employer Health Benefits: 2005 Summary of Findings*. Menlo Park CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.

Executive Summary in Jack Hadley. *Sicker and Poorer: The Consequences of being Uninsured*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, May 2002 (February 2003 update).

O'Brien E and Feder J. *Employment-Based Health Insurance Coverage and Its Decline: The Growing Plight of Low-Wage Workers*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, May 1999.

Session 6: Private Health Insurance and the Uninsured - II: Regulatory Policy (10/12)

- Problems in the individual or non-group health insurance market
- Regulatory strategies
- Case Study: NJ Non-Group Coverage Market Reform

Policy Memorandum Part 1 - DUE

Required reading:

Pollitz K, R Sorian & K Thomas. *How accessible is Individual Health Insurance for consumers in less-than-perfect health?* Menlo Park CA: Kaiser Family Foundation. June 2001.

Mark V. Pauly and Len Nichols. "The Non-group Insurance Market: Short on Facts, Long On Opinions and Policy Disputes," *Health Affairs* Web Exclusive, October 2002, w324-w344.

Monheit, AC, JC Cantor; M Koller & K Fox. Community Rating and Sustainable Individual Health Insurance Markets: Trends in the New Jersey Individual Health Coverage Program. *Health Affairs*. 23:4 (July/August 2004), 167-175.

Session 7: Long-Term Care (10/19)

- Financing and delivery of long-term care
- The Supreme Court Olmstead decision and "rebalancing" LTC
- Case Study: The NJ Independence, Dignity and Choice in Long-Term Care Act

Assign Health Disparities Policy Exercise

Guest Speaker: Winifred Quinn, PhD
Associate State Director-Health Advocacy
New Jersey AARP

Required reading:

Rosenbaum S. *Olmstead v. L.C.: Implications for Older Persons with Mental and Physical Disabilities*. Report #2000-21. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute. Nov. 2000.

Reinhard SC & CJ Fahey. *Rebalancing Long-Term Care in New Jersey: From Institutional to Home and Community Care*. Electronic Reports. New York: Milbank Memorial Fund. March 2003.

Arno, P; C Levine; & MM Memmott. The Economic Value of Informal Caregiving. *Health Affairs*. March/April 1999, 18(2): 182-188.

Session 8: Inequality and Disparities in Health and Health Care (10/26)

- Inequality in health and health care by socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity
- Causes of health disparities
- Role of government in addressing disparities
- Case Study: NJ Cardiac Diagnostic Facility Regulatory Reforms

Policy Memorandum Final Version - DUE

Health Disparities Policy Exercise - DUE

Required reading:

David R. Williams. "Patterns and Causes of Disparities in Health," Chapter 8 in David Mechanic, Lynn Rogut, David Colby and James Knickman, eds. *Policy Challenges in Modern Health Care*. 2005. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. pp. 115-134.

Ernest Moy, Elizabeth Dayton, and Carolyn Clancy. "Compiling the Evidence: The National Healthcare Disparities Reports." *Health Affairs*, March 2005; 24(2): 376-387.

Rosenbaum S, A Markus, J Darnell. US Civil Rights Policy and Access to Health Care by Minority Americans: Implications for a Changing Health Care System. *Medical Care Research and Review*. 2000. 57(Supplement 1): 236-259.

Lillie-Blanton M, et al. *Racial/Ethnic Differences in Cardiac Care: The Weight of the Evidence*. Summary Report. Menlo Park CA: Kaiser Family Foundation and American College of Cardiology Foundation. October 2002.

Session 9: Quality of Care, Patient Safety and Medical Malpractice (11/2)

- The quality/patient safety problem and potential solutions
- Role of the executive branch (regulation, report cards, licensure, etc.)
- Role of the judicial branch (medical malpractice and the tort system)

Draft Briefing Materials - DUE at start of class (Optional)

Guest Speaker: Professor John Billings
Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
New York University

Required reading: **TO BE DETERMINED**

Session 10: Health Care Costs, Managed Care and Health Care Markets (11/9)

- Health care cost inflation: extent and causes
- What is managed care and what impact does it have?
- Role of market competition in health care costs and quality

Required reading:

Bradley C. Strunk, Paul B. Ginsburg, and John P. Cookson. "Tracking Health Care Costs: Declining Growth Trend Pauses In 2004." *Health Affairs Web Exclusive*, June 21, 2005.

Gerard F. Anderson, Peter S. Hussey, Bianca K. Frogner, and Hugh R. Waters. "Health Spending In The United States And The Rest Of The Industrialized World." *Health Affairs*, July/August 2005; 24(4): 903-914.

Kenneth E. Thorpe, Curtis S. Florence, David H. Howard, and Peter Joski. "The Rising Prevalence of Treated Disease: Effects on Private Health Insurance Spending." *Health Affairs Web Exclusive*, June 27, 2005.

Miller RH & Luft HS. "HMO Plan Performance Update: an Analysis of the Literature, 1997-2001". *Health Affairs*. 21(4):63-86, Jul-Aug 2002.

Mays GP, Claxton G & White J. "Managed Care Rebound? Recent Changes in Health Plans' Cost Containment Strategies." *Health Affairs*, Web Exclusive. August 11, 2004.

Sessions 11 and 12: Student Briefings (11/16 and 11/21)

Note: 11/21 is a Tuesday

- Everyone should expect to be prepared to present on the 16th
- Attendance is required for both the 16th and 21st, as usual

Session 13: Policy Strategies to Address Cost and Quality (11/30)

- Relationship between cost and quality
- Rationale for government intervention in cost and quality
- Policy strategies

Required reading: **TO BE DETERMINED**

Reminder: Reference for Web Critique:

Mardikian J. *Evaluating Health Related Web Sites*. Web Page. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Libraries (see Session 3 for Link).

Session 14: The Future of the US Health Care System (12/7)

- If the US health care system is so dysfunctional, why doesn't it change?
- What role are public opinion, demographics, and other forces likely to play in shaping health reform?
- What roles should/will states, the federal government and the private sector play in a reformed health care system?

Required reading:

Theda Skocpol and Patricia Seliger Keenan. "Cross Pressures: The Contemporary Politics of Health Reform," Chapter 2 in David Mechanic, Lynn Rogut, David Colby and James Knickman, eds. *Policy Challenges in Modern Health Care*. 2005. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. pp. 26-36.

Sherry A. Glied. "The Employer-Based Health Insurance System: Mistake or Cornerstone?" Chapter 3 in David Mechanic, Lynn Rogut, David Colby and James Knickman, eds. *Policy Challenges in Modern Health Care*. 2005. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. pp. 37-51.

Blendon, RJ and Benson JM. Americans' Views on Health Policy: A Fifty-Year Historical Perspective. *Health Affairs*, March/April 2001; 20:33-46.

Robert J. Blendon, Mollyann Brodie, Drew E. Altman, et al. "Voters and Health Care in the 2004 Election," *Health Affairs*, March 2005; Web Exclusive w5.86-w5.96. (Also assigned for Session 1)

No Class reading day (12/13)

Final Exam (12/21)
