

Topic to policy



Health Care Topic to Health Care Policy Todd Wallace HCS 455 Health Care Policy May 23, 2011 Anne Koepsell Health Care Topic to Health Care Policy Health care topics are one of the most debated areas that the government finds itself discussing.

The health care topics have the potential to affect all the people of the United States. When a topic becomes a policy on the federal level, it is implemented in every state. It is important to understand the process taken to create a policy from a topic because the policy will at some point affect all health care consumers and providers. Three main stages exist in the process to transform a topic into a policy. Those stages are the formulation stage, the legislative stage, and the implementation stage.

Coupled with the implementation stage is an evaluation of all the stages to determine effectiveness and gather information for use in future public health care policy making. Topic Selection All health care policy begins with the selection of a topic that seems to need addressed by permanent policy implementation. Many popular topics discussed include controlling the costs of health care, providing health care to all people, public health, research, and Medicare and Medicaid programs. The topic selected for policy formation is determined by the popular public opinion on what is the most important area to regulate. Most often it is to fight the increasing costs of health care. Formulation Stage In the formulation stage of policy making it is important to make sure that the topic selected is indeed an issue that requires government input to be solved. The policy makers determine the problem that needs a written policy to remedy, through many resources. In this case the problem that needs to be addressed is costs and spending in health care.

During this stage of the process, information should be gathered to support the need for a health care topic to be made into a policy. The information gathered comes from many sources and includes taxpayers, state and federal government, and special interest groups (National School Boards Association,? 2011). This information is used to determine the best solution to the issue and to determine the steps it will take to reach the end policy goal. The information gathered is from similar experiences with similar policies, input from states, educational research, and existing state and federal laws (National School Boards Association,? 2011).

Once this information has been gathered, it is turned into a formal bill and the legislative stage of the policymaking process begins. Legislative Stage Once all information has been added to the bill it is introduced into Congress or the Senate for debate. Any member of Congress or Senate can introduce the bill (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011).

The bill is defined by which house it originated in and contains a list of the sponsors of the bill (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011). The bill is sent to the committee in charge of hearing the primary issues of the legislation presented (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011). The chairperson of that committee is in control of whether that bill receives a hearing or if it is sent for a ??? mark up??? (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011). This is the part in the legislative process in which the committee and sub-committee can offer amendments to the proposed legislation (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011). When the

committee looks favorably at a bill it is presented to the entire legislative body (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011).

The committee is responsible for making the bill presentable to the entire legislative body by describing the intent of the legislation, the history of similar hearings of the committee, the impact on existing laws and programs, and the position of the majority of the committee (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011). That report is up for debate on the floor of the house and senate if the majority leaders and speaker of the house determine that it is important enough and when it will be up for debate (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011). The legislation can be amended and voted on for final passage in the house that it originated in (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011). If it passes in that house is sent the other house and follows the same steps to a final passage (National Association for the Education of Young Children,? 2011). When the legislation is passed in both houses the policy lands on the president's desk for approval or veto. If the president issues a veto of the legislation the amendment process begins again until all parties reach an agreement.

The legislative branch can override a veto but either way, signature or veto override, the legislation becomes policy. If no resolution is reached the legislation is scrapped and they advance to more important issues. When the policy is passed, the implementation process begins. Implementation Stage
The policy implementation stage is an important part of the process that begins when the government has made legislation into law. The policy is placed into the hands of the government agencies and departments

ultimately responsible for the policy for implementation (The Pennsylvania State University,? 2011). The agencies put into practice the stipulations of the new policy and provide the administration and enforcement of the new policy (The Pennsylvania State University,? 2011). The government agencies are given the resources needed to carry out the new policy so that the change that was intended will occur (The Pennsylvania State University,? 2011). This change is achieved by the forming of new agencies or by assigning new responsibilities to existing agencies to carry out the policies formed by the legislative branch (The Pennsylvania State University,? 2011).

This stage is important to the process because it defines the changes to be implemented that will be measured for the effectiveness of the new policy in the evaluation stage (The Pennsylvania State University,? 2011). Evaluation The policies that have been implemented must be evaluated for effectiveness. The effectiveness that needs to be measured is if the policy decreases the costs and spending in health care. The policy makers want to know if the policy is working as it was intended to when they were forming the policy. The policy is evaluated to determine if the effects were intended or unintended and if those results produce a positive or negative result for the target population () For example, did the policy do the opposite and increase the costs and spending associated with health care. This process is just as important to the process because it helps the policy makers determine the future of the program based on the meeting of objectives and quality () It allows them to have information gathered for future policy formation and implementation () The policy makers can make future policies

that reflect the positives of this policy and leave out the negatives in the new policy. Conclusion The process from taking a topic to a policy begins with information gathering based on a perceived issue that requires the government to provide support to eliminate an issue. Health care is one area that requires careful work in the formulation stage because that information is used in the legislative stage to take that topic from an idea to a policy that will affect every health care consumer and provider in the United States.

The legislative stage is a long process of committee hearings, debate, amendment, and approval. The approval of legislation by the president or through overriding a veto makes legislation a policy or law. That law is implemented through government agencies that are formed or have a change of responsibility. The agency is responsible for implementing the policy, the administration, and enforcement of the policy to meet the expectations of the legislative body.

Coupled with the implementation stage is an evaluation on the effectiveness of the policy. References National Association for the Education of Young Children.? (2011).? Steps in making a bill a law: the federal legislative process.? Retrieved from http://www.naeyc.org/policy/federal/bill_law

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