Policy Analysis for Project Officers

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HWTAC Webinar Series

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The Center for Health Workforce Studies at the University at Albany, SUNY

- Established in 1996

- Based at the University at Albany School of Public Health

- Committed to collecting and analyzing data to understand workforce dynamics and trends

- Goal is to inform public policies, the health and education sectors, and the public

- Broad array of funders in support of health workforce research

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Today's Presentation

- What is health policy?
- Setting the stage
- Understanding the issue
- Identifying the options
- Creating a process
- Communicating changes
- Developing an evaluation
- Understanding the implementation risks

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What is Health Policy?

Health policies are:

- Public policies that pertain to or influence the pursuit of health
- The aggregate of principles that distribute resources, services, and political influences that impact the health of the population
- Regulatory tools used by government to prescribe and control the behavior of a target group by monitoring the group and imposing sanctions if it fails to comply

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What is Health Policy?

Different Forms of Health Policies:

- Health policies can affect
  - groups or classes of individuals, such as physicians, the poor, elderly, and children
  - types of organizations, such as medical schools, HMOs, nursing homes, medical technology producers, and employers

What is Health Policy?

Allocative Tools:

- Involve the direct provision of income, services, or goods to a group of individuals or organization

Two main types:

- Distributive—policies spread benefits throughout society

- Redistributive—takes money or power from one group and gives it to another

As a result of allocative tools, health policy can be politically charged.

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What is Health Policy?

From your perspective:

- A "big" policy change could be developing programs to increase the use of NPs and PAs in mental health

- A "small" policy change could be changing the process for approving NHSC sites

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Setting the Stage

Think about:

- Your question or issue
- Your end game
- Your audience
- Stakeholder influence and involvement

Understanding the Issue

- What is your question or issue?
- What is the value and by whom?
- What are you trying to accomplish?
- How does it fit within your job?
- How does it fit within the mission of the organization?

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Who is the Audience?

- Who is your audience and what is their role within your organization?
- Do they have power to influence change?
- Is the issue within their scope of power?

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Who Are the Stakeholders?

- Who are the stakeholders?
  - How are they involved?
  - Who are the winners and losers?
- Stakeholders include:
  - Federal government
  - State and local government
  - Interest groups
  - The media
  - Experts and researchers

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Understanding the Issue

- Literature Review:
  - Library databases
  - Search terms

- Considering the data:
  - Primary data collection and analysis
  - Secondary data analysis

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What to Look For with Data

- Who collected it?
- What was the purpose?
- How was it collected?
  - Surveys
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
- Has it been cleaned?
- How does it relate to your question?

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Proposing a Solution

- Has the proposed solution been done before?
- Was the proposed solution successful?
- Can the proposed solution be replicated?
- What is the cost of the proposed solution?
- What is the cost of doing nothing?
- What are the pluses and minuses of implementing the proposed solution?
- Consider the alternatives.

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Implementing a Work Plan

- Identifying objectives
  - Are they measureable?
- Creating a task list
- Creating a time line
  - Small victories
- Identifying the individual(s) responsible
- Identifying resources
  - Funds
  - Staff
  - Other experts and resources
  - Don't forget stakeholder involvement

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Communicating the Changes

- Provide leadership and direction
- Develop communication strategies
  - Organizational leadership
  - Internal staff
  - External stakeholders
  - The press
- 30 second elevator speech

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Methods for Communicating the Changes

- Hold meetings
  - Town hall meetings
  - Open houses
- Make use of technology
  - Emails
  - Webinars
- Use your staff
  - Identifying champions
  - Let them do the talking
- Build on success
  - Focus on the small victories

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Developing an Evaluation

- As part of the implementation plan
  - Identify an evaluation method and strategy
  - Ensure the objectives selected can be measured
  - Identify the data needed to measure the objectives
- Ensure the evaluation plan is part of the process from the beginning

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Setting Up to Succeed

- Both shared and individual responsibility for implementation
- Leadership at multiple levels
  - Formal and informal leaders
- Ensuring common language is used
- Expectations are managed
- Planning and feedback is continuous
- Orientations prospective, not retrospective

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What Makes Implementation Risky?

- Many well-planned policies fail during implementation:
    - Lack of provider buy-in
    - Lack of top management support
    - Lack of patience by politicians
    - Insufficient resources
    - Insufficient attention to implementation
- Policy implementation may fail due to poor planning

What Makes Implementation Risky?

- Unclear objectives and deliverables
- Failure to identify responsible individuals
- Unrealistic schedules
- Shortages of key resources
- Lack of infrastructure and support
  - Management
  - Backroom function
- Lack of internal management capacity

Questions?

- For more information, please email me at: rmartiniano@albany.edu

- Visit us on:

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