

PREFACE

US policymakers have struggled for decades to find solutions for our healthcare challenges. Thus, healthcare reform is among the top priorities of almost every presidential administration. The COVID-19 pandemic that prompted lockdowns across the country in March 2020 and persists through today has presented major public health challenges and significantly disrupted the delivery of health care services until recently. It also exposed inadequacies in health and public policies with regard to responding to emergencies such as pandemics and safeguarding people's livelihoods. From both policy and practice perspectives, much still needs to be done to prepare for future threats to the health and safety of populations in the United States and across the world.

This introductory textbook on US health policy covers the related areas of health policymaking, critical health policy issues, health policy research, and an international perspective on health policy and policymaking. The book offers the following features:

- ◆ Real-world cases to exemplify the theories and concepts presented from a variety of perspectives, including the hospital setting, public health, managed care, ambulatory care, and extended care
- ◆ Exhibits and extra feature boxes (Learning Points, For Your Consideration, Key Legislation, Research from the Field, International Policymaking, Global Health Impact, and others) that present background information on concepts, examples, and up-to-date information
- ◆ Learning objectives and key points
- ◆ Discussion questions
- ◆ A glossary

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

This book is organized in four parts: an introduction, an overview of health policymaking, a health policy issues section, and a discussion of health policy research and analysis. Chapter 1, the sole chapter in part I, introduces key terms related to, and the determinants of, health and health policy. It lists the key stakeholders in health policymaking and presents important reasons for studying health policy. The chapter lays the foundation for the rest of the book.

Part II—containing chapters 2, 3, and 4—examines the policymaking process at the federal, state, and local levels; in the private sector; and in international settings. Chapter 2 focuses on the policymaking process at the federal level of the US government. Important activities within the three policymaking stages—policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy modification—are described. The key characteristics of health policymaking in the United States are analyzed, and the role of interest groups in making policy is discussed.

Chapter 3 focuses on the US policymaking process at the state and local levels and in the private sector, which includes the research community, foundations, and private industry. Examples of policy-related research by private research institutes and foundations are described. The impact of the private sector's services and products on health and policy is illustrated using the fast-food industry as well as tobacco and pharmaceutical companies as examples.

Chapter 4 discusses international health policymaking. The World Health Organization (WHO) is presented as an example of an international agency involved in policymaking related to health and major health initiatives. Three countries—Canada, Sweden, and China—are highlighted to illustrate diverse policymaking processes in distinct geographic regions. The experiences of these countries show that different political systems and policymaking processes lead to diverse approaches to population health and healthcare delivery.

Part III—encompassing chapters 5, 6, and 7—examines the policy issues related to social, behavioral, and medical care health determinants; to people from diverse or medically or socially vulnerable populations; and to international health. Chapter 5 describes how US healthcare is financed and delivered. Private and public health insurance programs are summarized, and the subsystems of healthcare delivery—managed care plans, safety net providers, public health programs, long-term care services, and military-operated healthcare—are introduced. After summarizing the major characteristics of US healthcare delivery, the chapter provides examples of health policy issues related to financing (cost containment) and delivery (healthcare workforce, professional accreditation, antitrust regulations, patient access to care, and patient rights).

Chapter 6 defines medically and socially vulnerable populations and discusses the dominant healthcare policy issues related to those populations. People from diverse populations include members of racial or ethnic minorities, the uninsured, people with low socioeconomic status, the elderly, people with chronic illness, people with mental illness, women and children, people with disabilities, the homeless, and people with HIV/AIDS.

In each segment, the magnitude of the problem is summarized and a detailed discussion of the policies and strategies meant to address the problem is presented.

In chapter 7, dominant health policy issues in the international community are discussed, with examples given for select countries, to help students understand not only international health policy applications but also the field of global health. The chapter begins by examining issues shared by developed countries, such as modifying health systems to better serve aging and diverse populations while maintaining high-quality care at a low cost. It then discusses challenges faced by developing nations, such as controlling the spread of disease, creating and maintaining high-functioning health systems with limited resources, and dealing with the burdens of morbidity and mortality associated with poverty. Several emerging issues are also illustrated that could affect global health in the future.

Part IV—comprising chapters 8, 9, and 10—presents an overview of policy analysis, focusing on examples of commonly used quantitative and qualitative methods. Chapter 8 introduces health policy research (HPR) and highlights the discipline’s defining characteristics, including applied, policy-relevant, ethical, multidisciplinary, scientific, and population-based studies. The HPR process is summarized, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of ways to communicate findings and the challenges in implementing those findings in practice.

Chapter 9 illustrates commonly used methods in HPR. Quantitative methods include experimental research, survey research, evaluation research, cost–benefit analysis, and cost-effectiveness analysis. Because evaluation research is closely tied to policy research, the process involved in this type of research is described in greater detail. Qualitative methods include participant observations, in-depth interviews (including focus groups), and case studies. Examples of published studies using these methods are provided.

Chapter 10 provides an example that illustrates the key steps in health policy analysis: assessing the determinants of a health problem, identifying a policy intervention to address the problem, critically evaluating the policy intervention, and proposing next steps in addressing the problem.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

This third edition has retained most of the features of the previous edition but with significantly updated material, derived from the latest sources and incorporating both reviewers’ and users’ constructive feedback. Major additions include such topics as the latest on the Affordable Care Act and Biden’s healthcare reforms, *Healthy People 2030*, COVID-19–related policies and critique, the One Health movement, health equity and racial justice, and global health policies and development, among others. We have updated all current case studies and added a new study to each such section. We have also updated figures and references as necessary using the latest published information.

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INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES

This book's Instructor Resources include a test bank, answers to discussion questions, and PowerPoint slides.

For the most up-to-date information about this book and its Instructor Resources, go to ache.org/HAP and search for the book's order code (24881).

This book's instructor resources are available to instructors who adopt this book for use in their course. For access information, please email hapbooks@ache.org.