

**HADM 7600**  
**Health Policy and Management**  
**Policy Memorandum**  
**Instructor: Angela Fertig**

**Deadlines:**

The final version of your policy memo is due **December 1, 2009**. You may submit your Memo draft for my comments anytime before November 12, 2009. Feel free to complete your policy memorandum at any time during the semester.

**The Assignment:**

**Option 1:** Assume that you are a health policy advisor in a state of your choice. Pick a state health policy topic of interest to you (not necessarily current or past legislation) and provide a policy memo to the Governor that summarizes the issue, provides a recommendation on action (for example, to propose new legislation, to amend current legislation, etc.), provides background information on the topic, and provides pros and cons of the recommendation, with information about who would be in support or against the proposal. The memo should be no more than 4 pages double-spaced, plus references.

**Option 2:** Assume that you are a health policy advisor to a U.S. Senator in the state of your choice. Pick a current *national* health policy topic and write a policy memo to the Senator that explains the issue, summarizes current national legislation/policy activity, and provides a recommendation to the Senator about how to proceed. The memo should be no more than 4 pages double-spaced, plus references.

**General Instructions:**

See "PolicyMemoExample" for an example.

Policy memo should begin with a summary statement of the issue and your recommendation.

The next section of the memo should include a summary of what the issue is and *why* the issue is important for improving national population-level health, and then more specifically for improving health in *your state*.

A well-rounded memo will balance out the "pros" of the policy with a brief discussion of the "cons," including possible rebuttals for the Senator or Governor to address his/her opponents. This section should also include the political ramifications of supporting or opposing the policy, by keeping in mind the politician's ideology and political interests, and potential interest group opposition or support.

If you have any doubts that your topic is not a health policy topic or about how to structure a policy memo, please discuss with me during office hours, by email, after class, etc.

**References:**

All references should be clearly disclosed and cited throughout text of the memo. A complete reference section is not included in the 4 page memorandum limit. References must include complete citations.\* Be sure to include peer reviewed literature, government reports, legislation, and consensus documents, and other sources of information as appropriate.

**Grading:** The assignment is worth 20% of the course grade. Grading will be based on the following criteria:

- Does the policy memo clearly define the health policy?
- Does the analyst support arguments with credible reference sources?
- Does the analyst convey the magnitude and importance of the population health problem to be addressed?
- Does the analyst demonstrate a basic grasp of the political ramifications? Again, feel free to consult with others in developing this.
- Is the policy memo well written? Feel free to get editing help from others.
- Does it read like a policy memo addressed to a politician (i.e. does it minimize jargon, define terms, outline strategies, etc. Remember: your politician is probably not a public health expert: can he or she be expected to understand your analysis and its recommendations?)

\*Public Health students should use the citation conventions of the *American Journal of Public Health*. Other students may choose the citation conventions most appropriate to their discipline (or use AJPH).