

Master of Arts in Legislative Affairs  
PSc 224.LH3-Mental Health Care Policy

FIRST SUMMER SEMESTER 2006

Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Location - Hall of States

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OVERVIEW

Without doubt, health care is one of the most complex and controversial subjects facing Washington policy makers. Most of the debate about healthcare occurring in Washington never mentions mental health policy. And yet, in any given year approximately 19% of all Americans will experience some type of mental disorder. The World Health Organization in conjunction with the World Bank and Harvard University have concluded that mental illnesses rank second in the burden of disease in established market economies like the United States.

This course will begin with an examination of the historic tension between the States and Congress regarding mental health policy and financing. The remainder of the course will examine current topics in health care, through the lens of mental health policy and service delivery. Proposed reforms for private insurance, Medicaid, and Medicare all impact mental health, and yet you hear very little about this in the public debate. We will discuss the origins of these programs, various changes that have occurred over time, with an examination of key political actors and influences. The goal of this class is to raise the level of expertise of the student to healthcare issues broadly, and mental health policy specifically so that as you take on the role of health LA, health policy specialist for an association, or health policy advisor for a campaign you understand the particular issues affecting mental health.

Topical class lectures will be augmented by student presentations and analysis of relevant legislative proposals. During the course each student will make one or two class presentations on a specific legislative proposal as part of class discussion. All students will participate in a group role play project designed to bring the issues and dynamics discussed in class to life.

GRADING

- You are responsible for three written assessments of current legislative proposals affecting mental health care. You are responsible for three of these “decision” memos and their due dates are noted on the class schedule. Each paper is worth 20% of your final grade. Your decision memo may not exceed 3 pages in length and should include a summary of the problem(s) addressed by the legislation, a summary of the legislative proposal, and its

legislative history. Your analysis will address the adequacy or limitations of the proposal, along with some analysis of the likelihood of its action/success. You are encouraged to use as many outside sources as appropriate in an effort to analyze the proposed legislation.

Each week a number of students will present their analysis memos to the class to stimulate discussion. Assignment of class presentations will be made on the day that memos are due and class presentations will count for 5% of your overall grade.

- You are responsible for participating in a group role play project addressing a pressing problem or concern in mental health service delivery, financing, or policy that has not been a topic of the analysis memos. Topics for the role play need to be approved by the professor.

This assignment is intended to help you understand the dynamics of policy making and provides you with an opportunity to apply some of what you have learned in class.

Your role play should be designed as a Congressional hearing addressing a particular problem, or if you feel energetic, a particular legislative proposal. Some members of the group will assume the role of Committee members and others will act as witnesses. I would like you to provide witnesses with differing interests and view points regarding a particular topic. Throughout the class you will learn about the differences in perspective both within and toward mental health issues. I ask that you incorporate this information into your role play.

The particular perspectives represented will vary, depending on the issue selected, but may include: mental health consumers, family members, and parents; mental health providers; State mental health authorities; governors; state Medicaid agencies; insurance companies; small business; chamber of commerce; and law enforcement.

Testimony must be supported by research and the written testimony will be submitted as part of your grade. Any testimony is not to be longer than 2 pages. In addition to any testimony developed, I expect you to submit a paper of no more than three pages that summarizes the issue, as well as policy options to address it. The total number of students will help determine the number of students participating in each group.

All members of the group must have a speaking/participatory role in the presentation.

We will select groups during the second class and topic selection must be finalized by the fourth class. The group presentation is worth 20% of your final grade.

- You are responsible for regularly attending class and actively participating in class discussions. Class contribution is worth 15% of your final grade.

### Grading Scale

All assignments will be given a numerical score. Scores will be computed using the above averages. The following ranges will be used to arrive at a final grade for the class:

95-100	A
90-94	A-
86-89	B+
83-85	B
79-82	B-
74-78	C+
70-73	C

### REQUIRED READINGS

Please purchase the following book from the George Washington University bookstore:

Mental Health Services: A Public Health Perspective (2004) Lubotsky-Levin, Bruce, Petriola, John, and Hennessy, Kevin. Oxford University Press, New York.

The Political Life of Medicare (2003) Oberlander, Jonathon. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. (ISBN: 0-226-61596-0)

Specific readings are set for each class. Please read the syllabus closely for reading assignments.

You may find the following sources of interest for your analysis memos and group project: Congressional Research Service, Congressional Budget Office, Kaiser Family Foundation ([www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ([www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org)), Commonwealth Fund ([www.cmwf.org](http://www.cmwf.org)), National Mental Health Association ([www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)), Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health ([www.ffcmh.org](http://www.ffcmh.org)), National Alliance for the Mentally Ill ([www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)), and the Mental Health Liaison Group ([www.mhlg.org](http://www.mhlg.org)).

### ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

Analysis memos are due at the beginning of class on the following days:

1. June 7, 2006
2. June 19, 2006
3. June 21, 2006

Please consult the syllabus for details on the topics of the memos.

## SYLLABUS

**Session 1**  
Monday  
May 22, 2006

Introduction: Class Overview and Objectives. Introductory Conversation about mental illnesses – what are they and why do they matter to the healthcare system?

*Readings:*

- Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General. Chapter 2 – Overview of Mental Illness; Overview of Etiology; Overview of Development, Temperament, and Risk Factors; Overview of Prevention; and Overview of Treatment (Pages 39- 73). Accessible at:  
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/home.html>
- 2003 Report of the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, *Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America*. Goal 1 (Pages 19-26). Accessible at:  
<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/reports/reports.htm>

**Session 2**  
Wednesday  
May 24, 2006

Understanding the history and current Structure of the Mental Health Care Coverage System.

Advances in scientific knowledge, financing and policy have played critical roles in the evolution of mental health service delivery and organization. This session will explore the historic tension between the States and the Federal Government in areas of policy and financing and describe the current structure and financing of care for mental illnesses.

*Readings:*

- *Mental Health Policy in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century America*. Grob, Gerald N. in Mental Health United States, 2000. Accessible at:  
<http://www.mentalhealth.org/publications/allpubs/SMA01-3537/default.asp>
- *Mental Disability Law, Policy, and Service Delivery*. Pettila, J, and Lubostsky Levin, B. (Chapter 3 of Mental Health Services: A Public Health Approach)

Mental Health Policy in the Context of Overall Health Policy

During this session we will discuss the competing interests and political forces that influence mental health policy development in Congress. This will include discussions of key business, professional and mental health

advocacy organizations as well as a discussion of key Congressional supporters of mental health policy and services.

*Readings:*

1. *Public Mental Health Systems: Structures, Goals, and Constraints* (Chapter 4 of Mental Health Services: A Public Health Approach)

**Session 3**

Wednesday

May 31, 2006

Mental Health in the Private Sector

This session will examine private insurance coverage for mental disorders within indemnity plans and managed care arrangements. It will examine the evolution of private market coverage, the development of managed care and the relationship of mental health care to physical health care.

*Readings:*

- *Insuring Mental Health Care in the Age of Managed Care.* Conti, R., Frank, R.G., and Mc Guire, T.S. (Chapter 2 Mental Health Services: A Public Health Approach)
- *The Costs of Mental Health Parity: Still an Impediment?* Barry, C.L., Frank, R.G. and McGuire, T.G. Health Affairs, Volume 25, Number 3 (May/June 2006).
- *The Moral Hazard Myth.* Malcolm Gladwell. New Yorker, August 29, 2005. Accessible at [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com)

**Session 4**

Monday

June 5, 2006

Medicaid - Overview

In this session we will discuss the history, purpose and current structure of Medicaid. We will examine the importance of Medicaid to mental health policy and financing and examine the implications of current Medicaid reform proposals and State waiver activity on mental health.

*Readings:*

- *Medicaid: A Primer*, CRS Report for Congress [http://openocrs.cdt.org/rpts/RL33202\\_20051222.pdf](http://openocrs.cdt.org/rpts/RL33202_20051222.pdf)
- *There's Something About Medicaid*, Alan Weil. Health Affairs, January/February 2003. Accessible at: [http://www.allhealth.org/event\\_040405.asp](http://www.allhealth.org/event_040405.asp)
- *Short-Run Medicaid Reform*, Report from the National Governor's Association. Accessible at: <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0508MEDICAIDREFORM.PDF>

**Session 5**  
Wednesday  
June 7, 2006

Medicaid – implications for mental health and current legislative proposals

In this session we will examine the pros and cons of Medicaid financing for mental health services as discussed in the field. We will also have class presentations and discussion regarding two mental health/Medicaid related proposals currently before Congress.

*Readings:*

- *Medicaid and Mental Health: Be Careful What You Ask For.* Frank R.G., Goldman, H.H., and Hogan, M. Health Affairs. Vol. 22, Number 1 (101-113).
- *Medicaid, Health Care Financing Trends, and the Future of State-Based Public Mental Health Services,* Jeff Buck. Psychiatric Services, July, 2004. Vol. 54, No.7. (969-975) Available at: <http://psychservices.psychiatryonline.org>
- *The Struggle to Provide Community-Based Care to Low-Income People with Mental Illnesses.* Cunningham, P., McKenzie, K, and Fries Taylor, E. Health Affairs. May/June 2006. Vol. 25 (3), 694-705.

**Analysis Memos due:**

Dylan James Act (S. 183 / HR 1443)

**Session 6**  
Monday  
June 12, 2006

Federal Housing Policy and Persons with Mental Illness

This session will address Federal housing policy with particular attention to how these policies affect persons with mental illness.

*Readings:*

- *Opening Doors: A Housing Publication for the Disability Community.* <http://www.tacinc.org/Pubs/ODpubs.htm#28>

Please read the following two issues of the publication:

- Issue 28, April 2006  
***The Section 8 Project-Based Voucher Program: Creating New Housing Opportunities for People with Disabilities***
- Issue 27, October 2005  
***Priced Out in 2004: The Escalating Housing Crisis Affecting People with Disabilities***

**Session 7**  
June 14, 2006

Medicare

This session will address the history and structure of the Medicare program with an examination of its beneficiaries, services and current fiscal constraints. As always, we will examine the role of Medicare in financing care for persons with mental illness.

*Readings:*

- The Political Life of Medicare, by Jonathon Oberlander

**Session 8**  
June 19, 2006

Medicare Modernization and Improvement Act of 2003

We will examine the key features and implementation timeline for programs authorized by this legislation with an emphasis on the implications for persons with mental illness, especially those individuals that are “dual eligibles.”

*Readings*

- Resources on the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit. Available at: <http://www.kff.org/medicare/rxdrugdebate.cfm>

See in particular:

- [Medicare Prescription Drug Law Fact Sheet](#)
- [The "Clawback:" State Financing of Medicare Drug Coverage](#)
  
- *Mental Health in the Medicare Part D Drug Benefit: A New Regulatory Model?* Donohue. J. Health Affairs, Volume 25, Number 3 (May/June 2006). 707-719.

**Analysis memo due**

1. Medicare Dual Eligible Prescription Drug Coverage Act of 2005 (S 566/HR 1144); and

And (**one memo for both**)

2. Medicare Mental Health Co-payment Equity Act of 2005 (HR 1125)

**Or**

Medicare Mental Health Modernization Act of 2005 (S. 927/H.R. 1946)

**Session 9**  
June 21, 2006

Children's Mental Health

While there continues to be growing recognition that children and adolescents can experience emotional, behavioral, and mental disorders, there is much controversy regarding the most appropriate approach to treatment, and a dearth of policy and financing resources to address these

issues.

*Readings:*

- *Child Mental Health Policy*, Friedman, R.M., et.al. (Chapter 7 -- Mental Health Services: A Public Health Approach)
- *Beyond Integration: Challenges for Children's Mental Health*. Knotzer, J & Cooper, J. Health Affairs, Volume 25, Number 3 (May/June 2006).

**Analysis memo due:**

Parental Consent Act of 2005 (HR 181 IH)

Or

Keeping Families Together Act (HR 823 / S 380)

**Session 10**

June 26, 2006

Mental Health and the Criminal Justice System

The emphasis in mental health treatment for the last thirty years has been on community-based as opposed to institutional treatment for persons with mental health disorders. During this time, there has been a precipitous increase in the number of persons with mental illness coming into contact with the criminal justice system. Recently, efforts have been made to address this issue.

*Readings:*

- *Mental Health Issues in the Criminal Justice System*. Borum, R. (Chapter 14 -- Mental Health Services: A Public Health Approach)
- *The Second Chance Act of 2005* (H.R. 1704)

**Session 11**

June 28, 2006

Group presentations.