

Nursing and Health Policy: Making a Difference

Do you notice that more and more, the problems you see in clinical settings may have their roots in policy problems? For example, if you work in an emergency department, perhaps the increasing numbers of mentally ill or homeless people seeking services reflect policy changes that reduced funding for treatment and supportive housing services. Or, if you work in a diabetes clinic, perhaps aggressive corporate marketing of high-calorie, low nutrient foods is on your radar. If you care for patients with asthma or emphysema, you may have thought about the role of smokefree policies in providing cleaner air for everyone and preventing disease.

These are all examples of health policy issues.

The nursing profession has a growing role in the health policy arena as nurses are assuming leadership roles in health policy advocacy, research, analysis, policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

Purpose: The UCSF programs in Health Policy focus on preparing students to provide policy leadership in a variety of settings. Graduates will be prepared to: identify and critically analyze laws, regulations and policies at the institutional, local, state and national levels; to use in-depth knowledge of the history, structure, theory and process of health policymaking in the United States; and to plan, implement, and evaluate policies. In addition, they will understand the economic, ethical, and social implications of policy decisions for various affected groups, and be prepared to creatively and effectively advocate for policy change. We are committed, as a department and a community of students, staff, and faculty, to working to advance racial and social justice and health equity; ^[1][read about our commitment, here.](#) ^[1]

Career Possibilities: Nurses with policy expertise are employed by health services research firms, work in legislative and regulatory offices at the county, state and federal levels, or hold elective or appointed office. Others work in the legislative or policy offices of health maintenance organizations, advocacy organizations, health care companies or health care provider associations, or consult for these and other organizations. One can also find nurses with careers in policy and program planning at international government health organizations and non-governmental organizations.

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Links

[1] <https://nursinghealthpolicy.ucsf.edu/our-commitment-racial-and-social-justice>