

## PhD in Nursing: Health Policy

The Ph.D. program in nursing with a subspecialty in Health Policy prepares students to conduct policy related research and to provide organizational leadership in health care. The program is part of the regular UCSF Nursing doctoral program, but includes a focused curriculum that better prepares nurses for policy work. The specific objectives of the specialty in health policy are:

- Analyze the history, structure, and process of health policy making in the United States;
- Assess the policy and ethical dimensions of issues in the clinical practice, teaching, and research environments, and translate nursing practice issues into policy issues;
- Identify, critically analyze, and evaluate laws, regulations, and policies at the institutional, local, state, and national levels that impact patients and the practice of nursing;
- Conduct health services research and policy and economic analyses;
- Participate in policy and ethical debates and utilize criteria and processes by which policies are developed, implemented, evaluated, changed, and maintained;
- Participate in the policy-making process, including core knowledge in health services research, policy theory and analysis, economics, ethics, medical sociology, health organizations and professions, and labor issues.

## Program Curriculum

Each doctoral student works with his or her advisor in developing an individualized plan for his or her doctoral work, which culminates in the doctoral dissertation, a . Students take core methods and theory courses as part of the regular nursing doctoral program and are given wide flexibility in developing health policy electives that meet their own interests. Special program events, such as the annual health policy student-faculty dinner, help policy students connect across student cohorts. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to be involved in student government and faculty-student committee activities.

Students are required to take at least one research rotation with a health policy faculty member during their program. Students will also be encouraged to collaborate with other faculty members on research to gain experience in a variety of research methods and projects.

The program also has a noon proseminar on health policy issues. The health policy proseminar brings together doctoral and master's students in health policy with health policy faculty members and policy leaders on a weekly basis. The discussions focus on the leading health policy debates and faculty and students present their research.

UCSF offers a large number of health policy courses in a wide array of areas. Students can individually tailor their health policy interests and have a wide range of faculty to work with at the University. In addition, students on the UCSF campus can take courses at UC Berkeley,

Hastings College of Law, or Stanford, all participants in a Consortium. These larger University resources enable students to take courses depending on their specific research projects.

**The Model Curriculum for the Nursing PhD Health Policy program is available [here](#)<sup>[1]</sup>.**

## Health Policy Specialty Coursework

Coursework covers the policy process including the structure of health care systems, economics of health care, communications and leadership strategies in policy, policy analysis, cost analysis in health care, health policy research, and the ethical and social aspects of policymaking. Students may choose policy-relevant electives focused on particular issues, including aging and long term care policy, ethics, managed care and financing, tobacco control policy, children and adolescent policy, labor market issues, race, class and gender factors in health care, social policy, women's health, and many other areas. Core doctoral coursework is taken in addition to specialty courses in health policy.

## Core Health Policy Specialty Courses

- **Theories of the Policy Process** focuses on learning and using theories of the policy process, including analyzing how health policy problems are constructed. Perspectives on agenda setting, media roles, advocacy, policy innovation, diffusion, and implementation are integrated with examples of policy problems.
- **Organizational Analysis of U.S. Healthcare** examines formal organizational theory, structure, and processes of health care organizations. The focus is on how organizations function within the socioeconomic and political environment in the United States.
- **Policy Proseminars** are designed to extend knowledge of the varied scope of health policy research and analysis. The series presents the policy research work of core and affiliated health policy faculty on the campus and offers the opportunity for students to become acquainted with the faculty in the program. The focus is on specific policy research, analysis and implementation strategies.
- **Research Rotations** provide students the opportunity to learn hands-on policy and research analysis working with faculty on a policy or research project. Guided laboratory experience is designed to develop mastery in policy analysis or research.
- **Race/Class Factors in Health Care Delivery** examines racial and class membership impact on access to health care services, variations in the quality of those services, and how professional and sub-professional roles in the health care system are organized along racial and class lines.
- **Health Policy I & II** addresses models of health policy research with a focus on integrating health services research theory and methods. Health service research designs that focus on high priority national policy issues are examined, addressing key health policy research questions and assessing policy outcomes.
- **Health Care Economics and Policy** provides a critical analysis of economic, sociological, and political factors that affect health care. It examines U.S. health policies that impact access, quality, costs, delivery systems, professional practices, and reform.
- **Ethical Issues in Nursing Practice** explores selected ethical theories including social ethics related to health care and nursing practice within the institutional and broader

health care policy context.

- **Communications and Policy Leadership** focuses on developing students' skills in various types of policy-relevant communications and leadership across different policy venues.
- **Policy and Politics of Health** examines health care policy and politics in terms of historical and contemporary issues related to access, quality, and cost. Organizational, financing, and labor market issues are included, along with strategies for social change.
- **Select Policy Electives**
- **Perspectives on Social Policy and Health** examines the impact of family and welfare policy on health status, health care access, and health outcomes. The course explores theories on the historical constructions of poverty and the poor and governmental policies affecting poor and working class employment, family supports, income subsidy, childcare, and access to health care. It examines the debates over universal access to health care and the impact of social constructions of poverty on the debate.
- **Social Policy and Aging** provides a critical analysis of major social, economic, and political issues of growing old in America. It examines social policy in the public and private sectors including health, income, and social services and considers prospects for social change and political movements.
- **Tobacco Control Policy** Issues focuses on issues and evolution of tobacco control policies in the U.S. and internationally. Lectures and readings in the history of tobacco control will prepare students to engage in weekly discussions and case studies of particular tobacco control policies, and to apply lessons from tobacco policy to other arenas.
- **Ethics & Policy** in Genetics & Genomics explores ethics, philosophy, and social policy of genetics research, screening, and therapeutic interventions using case-based discussions. Social and health care implications related to the understanding of human nature, informed consent, insurance, employment, emotional impact, and predictive variability of genetic screening will be explored.
- **Basic Topics in Leadership in Health Care Systems** examines basic topics in leadership in health care systems including management, human resources, financing and budgeting, and feedback and coaching.
- **Managing Change in Health Care Systems** examines the principles of organizational change in health care systems. These include strategy, decision-making and conflict management, communications, and quality improvement and management.
- **Leadership Development & Self Renewal** examines the principles of leadership and self-renewal including negotiating, motivating others, problem solving, managing diversity, improving care management, and developing skills and knowledge.
- **Information Technology and Organizational Change** examines information technology (IT) in health care organizations, with a focus on electronic medical records. The course covers: the potential for IT to improve quality; the economics of IT; theories of diffusion of innovations; theories of the relationship between IT, and behavior, practice and organizational changes; the costs and benefits of IT in health care costs and benefits and quality improvement; and alternative policy approaches to hasten IT adoption in health care.

Contact Us  
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**Source URL:** <https://nursinghealthpolicy.ucsf.edu/PhD>

**Links**

[1]

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gZIKHy5sjtRjcUlcXTIMMw\\_d7AKqOxslDVUH40o4ps/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gZIKHy5sjtRjcUlcXTIMMw_d7AKqOxslDVUH40o4ps/edit?usp=sharing)