

# **PCH 358 – Health Policy**

## **Introduction, effective writing, health policy overview**

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# Effective writing

I should apologize, perhaps for the style of this bill. I dislike the verbose and intricate style of the modern English statutes. . . .You however can easily correct this bill to the taste of my brother lawyers, by making every other word a 'said' or 'aforesaid' and saying everything over two or three times so as that nobody but we of the craft can untwist the diction, and find out what it means.

-Thomas Jefferson, 1817

# readers

- Readers have other options, many distractions
- You have precious little time to engage them
- Lose readers with every paragraph, every sentence, every word
- MEGO – my eyes glaze over

# audience

- Most important – get this first
- Determines voice, tone, citation style, format, color vs. not, pictures
- Use language appropriate to audience
- Reach them where they are -- through their experiences, their motivation

# tips

- Consider what you want the reader to understand
  - then don't clutter it up with anything that doesn't support that goal
- Plain English whenever possible
  - language use depends on audience
  - minimize jargon
- Less is more
  - edit mercilessly
- Avoid passive voice
- Most important info up front

# tips

- Use short, simpler sentences
- Use clear words
- Be clear about your point, don't make them guess what you meant
- Don't repeat yourself
- Punctuate carefully
- When in doubt, leave it out
- Use the active voice
- Paragraphs should have one point

# before and after

## Before:

When the process of freeing a vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, the operator will fill the rut or hole created by such activity before removing the vehicle from the immediate area.

## After:

If you make a hole while freeing a stuck vehicle, you must fill the hole before you drive away.

From: [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov)

# before

## Existing Label

### Allergy Tablets

**INDICATIONS:** Provides effective, temporary relief of sneezing, watery and itchy eyes, and runny nose due to hay fever and other upper respiratory allergies.

**DIRECTIONS:** Adults and children 12 years and over—1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours, not to exceed 6 tablets in 24 hours or as directed by a physician. Children 6 to 11 years—one half the adult dose (break tablet in half) every 4 to 6 hours, not to exceed 3 whole tablets in 24 hours. For children under 6 years, consult a physician.

**EACH TABLET CONTAINS:** Chlorpheniramine Maleate 4 mg. **May also contain** (may differ from brand): D&C Yellow No. 10, Lactose, Magnesium Stearate, Microcrystalline Cellulose, Pregelatinized Starch.

**WARNINGS:** May cause excitability especially in children. Do not take this product unless directed by a physician, if you have a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis, or if you have glaucoma or difficulty in urination due to enlargement of the prostate gland. May cause drowsiness; alcohol, sedatives and tranquilizers may increase the drowsiness effect. Avoid alcoholic beverages, and do not take this product if you are taking sedatives or tranquilizers without first consulting your physician. Use caution when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery. As with any drug, if you are pregnant or nursing a baby, seek the advice of a health professional before using this product. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children. In case of accidental overdose, seek professional assistance or contact a Poison Control Center immediately.

Store at controlled room temperature 2°-30°C (36°-86°F).

Use by expiration date printed on package.

Protect from excessive moisture.

For better identification keep tablets in carton until used.



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Made in U.S.A.

# after

## New Standard Labeling Format

<b>Drug Facts</b>	
<b>Active ingredient (in each tablet)</b> Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg.....	<b>Purpose</b> Antihistamine
<b>Uses</b> temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies: ■ sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes ■ itchy throat	
<b>Warnings</b> Ask a doctor before use if you have ■ glaucoma ■ a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis ■ trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives When using this product ■ drowsiness may occur ■ avoid alcoholic drinks ■ alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness ■ be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery ■ excitability may occur, especially in children If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a health professional before use. Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.	
<b>Directions</b>	
adults and children 12 years and over	take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
children 6 years to under 12 years	take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
children under 6 years	ask a doctor

<b>Drug Facts (continued)</b>
<b>Other information</b> ■ store at 20-25°C (68-77°F) ■ protect from excessive moisture
<b>Inactive ingredients</b> D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch

# tips

- Put contact information on EVERYTHING
- Cite everything, but how to cite depends on context
- End notes over footnotes
- The way you cite for papers in classes is not how you should in testimony or an op-ed
- You want them to remember your message, not your format – make it look like what they are used to and they will focus on your message

e.g. op-ed

- CT News Junkie, 9/7/17
- Is Overtreatment a Thing?
- [http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/archives/entry/op-ed\\_is\\_overtreatment\\_really\\_a\\_thing\\_2017\\_09\\_07/](http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/archives/entry/op-ed_is_overtreatment_really_a_thing_2017_09_07/)

# funny headlines

- Iraqi Head Seeks Arms
- Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says
- Farmer Bill Dies in House
- New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group
- If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile
- Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges

Source: [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov)

# less is more

Worse	Better
during the time that	while
there is no doubt but that	doubtless
this is a topic that	this topic
despite the fact that	although
in some instances	sometimes
that was a situation in which	there

# lists

To qualify for HUSKY you must be a low income child, low-income parent or caregiver of a child, low income elderly, disabled, have a specific condition, such as HIV, breast or cervical cancer or a very low income childless adult.

– OR

To qualify for HUSKY, you must be low income and

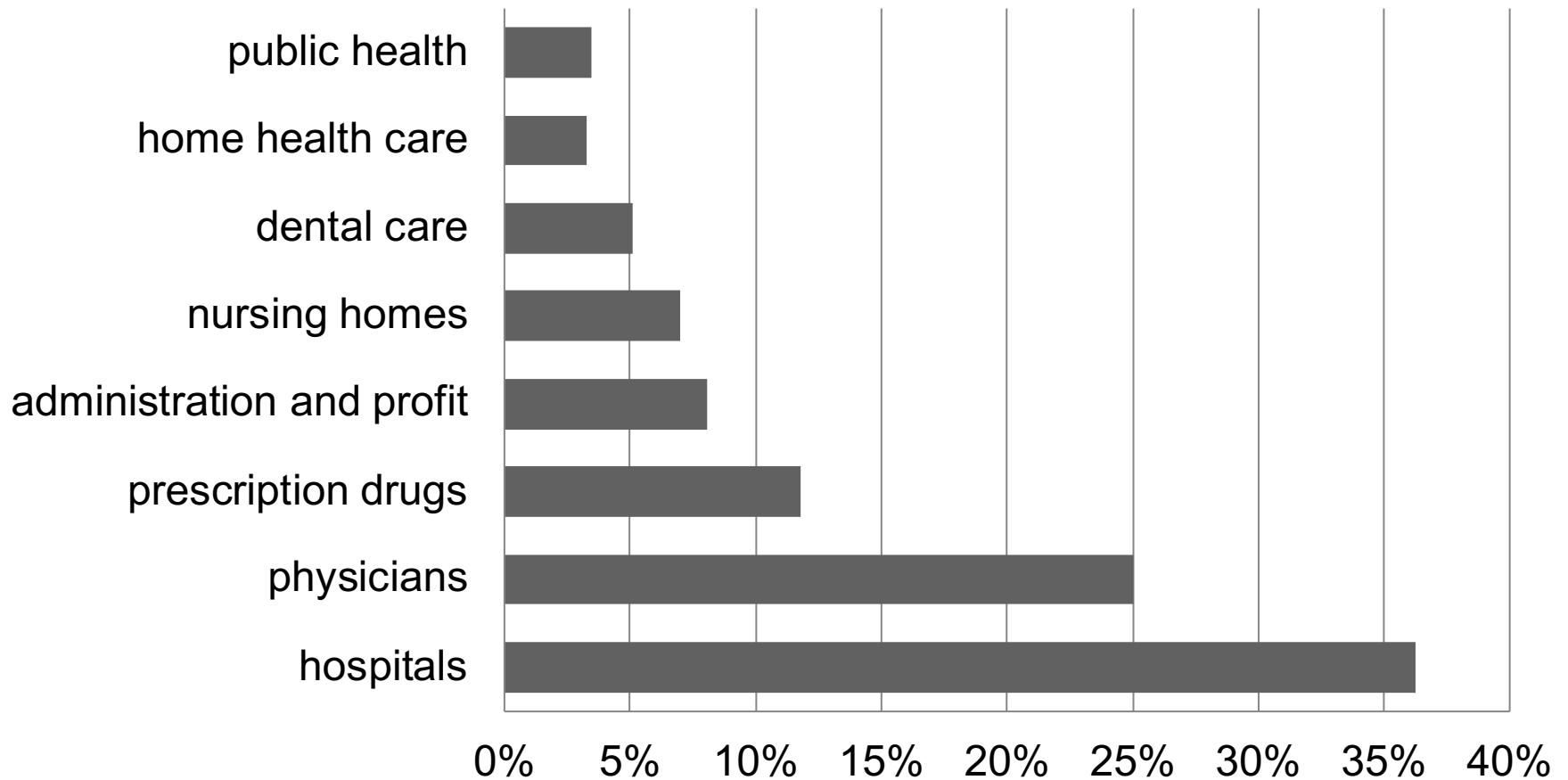
- Very low income childless adult
- a child
- parent or caregiver of a child
- elderly
- disabled or
- have a specific condition, i.e. HIV, breast or cervical cancer

# display of information

In 2008, the US spent 36% of health care dollars on hospital care, 25% on physician care, 12% on prescription drugs, 8% on administration and profit, 7% on nursing homes, % on dental care, and 3% each on home health care and public health.

or

## US health care spending 2008



# process

- Look to other examples for format, content, style
  - Choose successful examples
  - Be as specific as possible
- Ask for guidance
- Plan it out
- Give it a day (or two)
- Read it aloud
- Proofread carefully
- Share with someone else
- Give multiple “products” for multiple users of the information

# how to be a better writer

- Read good writing
- Read a lot -- follow good health policy sites, blogs, journals
- Join listservs
- Write often
- Have others read your writing
- Contact the Writing Center

# sources

- Use most up to date sources available
- Fact, fiction, propaganda?
- Best – peer reviewed journals, government sources, i.e. Census, BLS, CDC, CBO
- Next – respected, nonpartisan groups, i.e. Kaiser, RAND
- Press – use mainstream media, i.e. NY Times, Washington Post, LA Times
- Next – books, often authors have an agenda
- Worst – industry backed sources, secondary sources, political sources, opinion blogs

# “consider the source”

- Language use – objective or emotional?
- Are assertions backed up with citations, evidence?
- Good mix of primary and secondary sources?
- Is this plagiarized? Check for others with same information
- Who funds the organization? Who is on the board? Where did staff come from?

# good examples, sources

- Kaiser Family Foundation [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)
- *Health Affairs* [www.healthaffairs.org](http://www.healthaffairs.org)
- Urban Institute [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)
- RAND [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)
- Commonwealth Fund [www.cmwf.org](http://www.cmwf.org)
- Major newspapers

# Academic integrity

- Taken very seriously
  - Plagiarism is not tolerated
- Violation of trust, values
- Missing a unique learning opportunity
- Unfair to other students
- Can impact your career
- It is your responsibility to know SCSU's definition and policy
- If in doubt, cite your source

Once a particular senator read a speech to a lunch group and succeeded in boring everyone. Afterwards a feisty old lady came up to him and said, “How do you expect us to remember your speech when you can’t remember it yourself?”

– Tip O’ Neill, All Politics is Local

# effective presentations

- Get the details – audience, time, place, etc.
- What do you want them to walk away remembering – one or two things
- Prepare the talk and prepare for probable questions
- DO NOT read from slides or notes
- Practice on someone kind
- Leave handouts, but after your talk
- Have a beginning, middle and end
- Let them know what to expect
- Helpful to have an action step or place for more info at the end

# presentations

- Show up early
- Check systems
- Look at the audience
- Smile, when appropriate
- Talk slowly
- Ask for feedback/input when appropriate
- Leave time for questions or discussion
- Use humor carefully

# presentations

- Relax
- Take a breath
- Everyone in the audience has been in your shoes at some point
- It gets easier the more you do it
- For more advice, go to [http://www.cthehealthpolicy.org/toolbox/opinion/public\\_speaking.htm](http://www.cthehealthpolicy.org/toolbox/opinion/public_speaking.htm)

# debates for this class

- Respectful of all positions
  - More challenging to argue an unpopular side of the issue, but more opportunity to excel
  - Don't nitpick
- Good background, put proximate issue in context
- Prove your point, don't just give opinions
- Use facts, but only enough to make the point
  - No extra points for more numbers

# debate format

- 15 minutes each to make your case
- Use the time, don't rush, expand on/explore points
  - Background, context on the question
  - Describe proposed solution/position
  - Make your case
  - Summarize
- 5 minutes each for rebuttal
- Questions from classmates
- Use slides, bring a fact sheet
  - Students will revise fact sheet during class, return to debaters
- Everyone's assignment – reflect on the debate, 2 pages

America's health system is  
neither healthy, caring nor a  
system.

-- Walter Cronkite

# Health policy

Disclaimer on *Policy & Reform* chapter, The Health Care Handbook (2014):

This chapter is out of date. It went out of date the second we sent it to the printer.

- What's obvious may not be right (or may not work)
- What's right today may not be right tomorrow
- We're all just going with our best guess
- Don't get too bogged down in the moment – think of the past and the future
- Never be too sure of yourself

# Health policy

- The rules and conventions that define the health care system and how it works (or fails)
  - Stated and not
  - Official and traditions/culture
  - Formal and informal
- We will focus on CT in this class
- Policy matters – even if it seems it doesn't
- Process of policy development, changes
- Much agreement on goals in health care
  - Much angry disagreement on strategies to get there
- Public health is interwoven throughout the system

# Is health care a right?

*President Obama on signing the ACA: (2011)*

“We have now just enshrined the core principle that everybody should have some basic security when it comes to their health care”

*John Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods, Wall Street Journal opinion: (2009)*

“How can we say that all people have more of an intrinsic right to health care than they have to food or shelter? Health care is a service that we all need, but like food and shelter it is best provided through voluntary and mutually beneficial market exchanges. A careful reading of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution will not reveal an intrinsic right to health care, food or shelter. This ‘right’ has never existed in America.”

# Unique history of US health care

- Early control in setting the foundation of our system granted to independent providers (AMA, hospitals)
  - Respectable, trusted
  - Autonomous
  - Conflicting interests didn't foster integration or organization
- Health care was treated as a market good, rather than a social good
- Attached to employment in WW II
  - Labor tight, wage freeze
  - Health benefits ruled not wages
- Third party payers, insurance
  - Higher prices, salaries, administrative costs
- Science and technology advances without necessary evaluation
- Emphasis on specialization over primary care -- \$\$ and prestige

# Who sets/influences health policy?

- Who decides on health policies?
- Who can influence them?
- Who can undermine or kill policy?

# Who sets/influences health policy?

Government officials

Elected, appointed,  
bureaucrats

Standard setting bodies

Schools

Think tanks

Researchers

Media

Constituents

Nonprofit advocacy org.s

Individual and groups of  
providers

Hospitals

Insurers

Practices

Employers

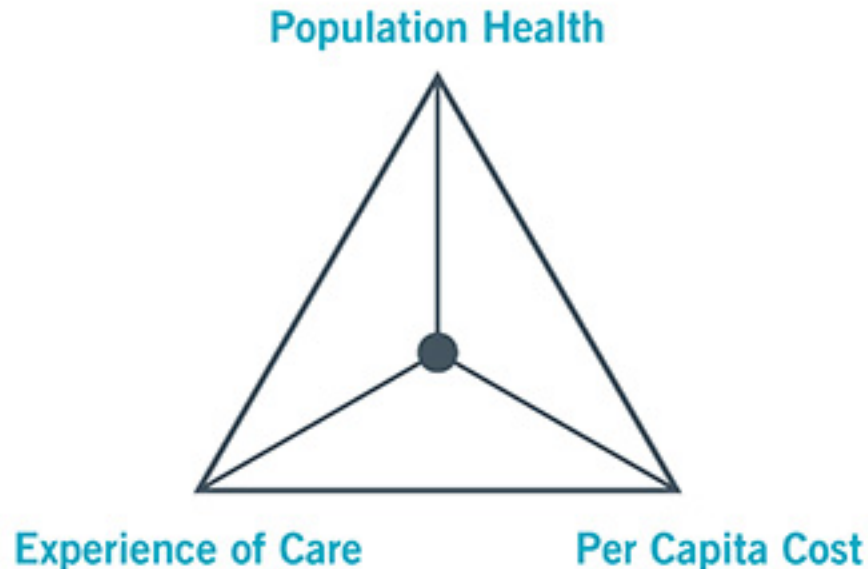
# Stakeholders and silos



What are the goals and values that guide health policy?

# What are the goals and values that guide health policy?

## The IHI Triple Aim



# Goals, values often mentioned

- Shared responsibility
- Improved quality
- Paying for value
- Bend the cost curve
- Improve efficiency, maximize resources
- Promote equality
- Autonomy
- Patient safety
- Stimulate/support the economy