Health in all policies as a health equity practice

Health Equity Learning Community
September 2018
Our focus today is Health in All Policies. We’ve talked about the health equity practices before, shown here in the circles. Over the course of the past year, we have touched on many of these, but we haven’t yet talked about policy. You’ve done Health In All Policies work through the State Health Improvement Partnership, so this isn’t completely new territory, but we are going to build on that foundation by adding some focus specifically on **advancing equity** through policy and by expanding the universe of what “policy” is.

So our meeting objectives today are to 1) Connect health issues with the relevant polices that affect them; 2) Understand public health’s role as a policy influencer and the assets needed to be effective; and 3) Share helpful resources with each other.

Let’s pause here and take a minute to think about what it means to advance equity by influencing policy and why it’s such an important practice when it comes to advancing equity. First, the root causes of inequities – the social conditions that shape health – are complex, and they are baked into our social, economic, and political systems. It’s hard to create equity without this practice. Policies shape our social conditions and determine the distribution of
resources. Working with individual clients is important work—it can’t and shouldn’t be discounted—**AND** we also need to move upstream to improve conditions for populations experiencing inequities. If we don’t, we’ll continue to pull people out of the river one at a time. To truly advance equity for more people we need to be working on policies that shape the conditions of our lives.
I’d like to show you a short video describes what we mean by Health In All Policies. Some of the policies they describe will sound familiar to you because they reflect your SHIP work. While noting those areas that you have some familiarity with, I’d encourage you to be open to and consider any new areas of policy that you might not have thought about before.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thYj8AlB3ms
Let's talk about the word “policy,” because it can mean a lot of different things.

A policy is…

So that means policies can be laws, rules, or procedures. They can be formal or informal, and set by the public sector – by government – or they can be private sector policies, like those in a workplace. They can be formal or informal. Sometimes we think of policy in a really narrow way, but that then limits the options available to us for action. For our purposes, “policy” is broadly construed.
How do we identify a policy opportunity?

Today we’re going to talk about two paths you can take to policy work. One is to start from a health issue, and consider the policies that shape it, and the other is to consider strategic opportunities that might exist in the local or state policy environment and ways you can influence that effort.
This is a tool I learned about when I participated in a national Maternal and Child Health Conference.

They asked us to think about an outcome we cared about, and then asked us to brainstorm all of the different policies that might affect that issue. For the purposes of the exercise, brainstorming rules apply: there’s no right/wrong, and you should not limit your thinking with any constraints, challenges, or other barriers or considerations. Just stream of consciousness thinking about what policies affect the outcome.

So I started with breastfeeding, and thought through the relevant policies. You can see here that I identified… [Describe.]

Does anyone have any questions about this worksheet, or about my process?
Debrief

What would be the most powerful influencer on your goal?

What were the policies that your team thought of?
Take a minute to review: Do your policy lists include both public and private?
Do they address root causes and social/economic conditions? What partners did you identify?

• Are there things you are already doing?
• Where do you have existing partnerships?
• Who would could be new partners? Who could you reach out to?
• Would this be something that you could do on your own? Or would you join an existing effort?
Another Example

Here’s an example that I like from the World Health Organization. They created an infographic about addressing air pollution as a health issue.

One in eight deaths is linked to air pollution exposure – mostly from heart and lung disease, and stroke.

http://www.who.int/social_determinants/publications/health-policies-manual/HiAP_Infographic.pdf?ua=1

*Who are the partners/sectors that public health would have to collaborate with?*
For me, one of the most important takeaways is about the different sectors that public health would need to collaborate with on this issue. Here’s my list.

Now take a minute to revisit the health issues you identified in your worksheet. Do any new partners come to mind?

http://www.who.int/social_determinants/publications/health-policies-manual/key-messages-en.pdf?ua=1
Another path: Identifying strategic opportunities

MDH staff describe how the Healthy Minnesota Partnership identifies strategic priorities and potential action steps.
Team discussion

• What are the local or regional policy discussions in your area that could have a potential impact on health?
• What are the statewide policy discussions that could have an impact on the health of people in your jurisdiction?
• What could LPH bring to these policy discussions?

Have people type into Chat box

Who else in your community is working on issues? How could you amplify their efforts? Strengthen their efforts?
Before we wrap up, I want to say a few things about the assets and competencies that you need to do health in all policies work effectively.

Cross Sector Partnerships

Data – qualitative and quantitative

Relationships

Health expertise

Organized people
Organized resources – data
Organized narrative
Skills

- You need to be able to:
  - Expand the conversation about health
  - Convene people with different interests
  - Embrace complexity
  - Amplify community voices

- You need to have:
  - Flexibility
  - Humility and confidence
  - Curiosity
  - Willingness to learn
  - Commitment
Moving into health in all policies

- Collect and share data on health determinants
- Monitor the activities of other sectors that impact on health
- Include policy change in your CHIP
- Create opportunities to talk to community and governmental partners across sectors
  - One-on-ones
  - Regular check-ins
  - Coalitions or committees

http://www.who.int/social_determinants/publications/health-policies-manual/key-messages-en.pdf?ua=1
Resource: MDH Request for Proposals
Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative
Tool: NACCHO matrix

http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/resources/equitylibrary/naccho-chimatrix.html
### Resource: Moving upstream

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinant</th>
<th>Upstream</th>
<th>Midstream</th>
<th>Downstream</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Advocate for living wage policies, wage capping, progressive taxation</td>
<td>Link clients with welfare, social assistance, or back-to-work programs</td>
<td>Ensure that chronic disease prevention programs are accessible to low-income people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Create opportunities for educators, law enforcers, and employers to work together to reduce barriers to education for youth</td>
<td>Support adult high school completion programs</td>
<td>Expand mental health promotion and early intervention programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Meet with elected officials and citizen groups to push for more affordable housing</td>
<td>Bring stakeholders together to improve the enforcement of regulations to improve substandard housing</td>
<td>Increase the availability of allergy and asthma treatment to vulnerable populations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://nccdh.ca/images/uploads/Moving_Upstream_Final_En.pdf
6 page document from Canada
Helpful grid on the SDOH
Policy can have a powerful impact on health
Public health has data, cross sector partnerships and other assets to bring to collective efforts to impact policy
Starting places and pathways
Public health cannot “go it alone” – it takes relationships and partnerships
Before we wrap up, let's take some time to share any tools, videos, readings, or other things about advancing equity that you might have seen since the last webinar. What have you see, heard, or read that made an impression on you, or that might be helpful to others to know about?
Next steps

- Complete a brief webinar evaluation, coming shortly
- In-Person Meeting 10/29 at the Arboretum
- Connect with your coaches
- Think about where your community health board’s health equity work might go next

Thanks everyone – we'll see you in next month. Have a great rest of your day.