THE POLITICS OF HEALTH POLICY
CHS/HS M287
Winter 2004

Course Requirements

1. **Choose an issue and a position that you will work on during quarter.** This quarter students will focus on either health issues in the 2004 Presidential election campaigns or on California’s SB 2, the Health Insurance Act of 2003.

1.1. **Form project group.** By the end of class two on Jan. 15, turn in 1 page that lists whether your group will focus on an issue related to the Presidential election campaigns or on SB2 and names of group members. For Presidential election campaigns, each group will choose an issue (e.g., expanding health insurance coverage, Medicare prescription drug coverage, environmental health, abortion, firearms) and organizations or a coalition that works nationally on that issue. For California’s SB 2, you will participate in a group that will focus on its repeal, legal challenges, and implementation issues.

1.2. **Develop workplan for project:** tasks, timeline, who is responsible for each task, and a list of organizations and coalitions relevant to your issue (due Jan. 22). For Presidential election campaigns, your group will either seek to get Democratic candidate(s) and President Bush to adopt your position or try to neutralize their opposition. For California’s SB 2, your group will either seek to block the law and its implementation or to defend the law and get it implemented.

2. **Individual Project: Key organizational actor analysis,** 5-8 pages, 1” margin, due Feb. 5 (week 5). For one of the key organizations in your group’s policy area (e.g., an advocacy group, provider group, industry/trade group, etc. on any side of the issue – note that it is not a good idea to use a government agency for your group for this assignment), obtain information on the organization and interview at least one key actor in the policy process. From both the interview and other information you gather, provide an analysis of the group’s involvement in the issue area. Be sure to include references to appropriate readings from class and cite the name and phone number of your organizational respondent. In your paper you must discuss (i.e., more than list or describe):

   (a) The group’s mission and membership, why it is interested in the issue, and the governmental level(s) where it is most active in the policy process;
   (b) An analysis of the group’s assets;
   (c) The major activities (strategy/tactics) it conducts in defining issues, promoting solutions, advocating legislation, and influencing implementation;
   (d) How the organization uses data in their advocacy work, and
   (e) An evaluation of the group’s strengths and weaknesses in the policy process.

3. **Group Project: Advocacy Strategy and Plan,** due on Monday, March 15 by 5 pm (submit to Drs. Brown’s & Wallace’s office at 10911 Weyburn Ave., Suite 300). Each group will develop a 20- to 25-page (double-spaced, 1” margins, 12-point font) strategy and plan to influence the politics and policy your group has chosen. Assume for the assignment that you
are the advocacy director of a new \textbf{coalition} that includes the organizations that group members contacted plus additional organizations as coalition members or opponents (you should include about twice as many organizations as you have group members). This plan should incorporate tools from both the class readings and lectures. Your plan should include at least the following issues:

- Brief description of problem area (e.g. why is it an important health issue? who does it affect? etc.), brief summary of policy (legislation, regulation, etc.) involved;
- Key policy actors (organizations, leaders, policy makers) involved in this policy issue and their stakes in the issue, including members of your coalition \textit{and} opponents;
- Your coalition’s policy goals and overall strategy for achieving them;
- Analysis of your coalition’s assets and how they can be mobilized, \textit{and} your opponents’ assets and how they can be countered;
- Ways in which the issue \textit{can} be framed, the framing that is most conducive to your policy goals, and how you plan to establish your framing as the most common basis for discussion of the issue in the public dialogue or debate; and
- A discussion of the tactics and actions proposed to move your issue to resolution; justify your key tactics with reference to their success in other campaigns.

You must cite required readings from class when appropriate. Additional citations, especially to materials such as policy papers, press releases, newspaper articles, etc. produced by participants in the process are also appropriate.

You must also include a peer evaluation (to be handed out) of all of the \textit{other} group members’ participation separately in a sealed envelope.
Presidential election campaigns

Each work group will choose an issue (e.g., expanding health insurance coverage, Medicare prescription drug coverage, environmental health, abortion, firearms) and a side in the debate (e.g., for or against something).

Your coalition’s goals are to get your position adopted by Presidential candidate(s) to the extent that is feasible or, insofar as it is not feasible, to neutralize Presidential candidates’ opposition. Note that goal will vary greatly across the different issues, with some issues being highly polarized from the beginning and others less so, with candidates seeking to co-opt some issues and positions, etc.

Identify organizations and coalitions that work nationally on that issue.

Each work group member will choose an organization for first assignment (organizational analysis).

Apply assignment instructions to your organization and your coalition.

For information on 2004 Presidential candidates’ health care reform proposals, visit: http://www.cmwf.org/programs/insurance/collins_reformagenda_671.pdf

California’s SB 2: repeal, legal challenges, and implementation issues

Your work group will either seek to block SB 2 (Health Insurance Act of 2003) and its implementation, or to defend the law and get it implemented.

Your work group will identify organizations and coalitions that are working on that issue.

Each work group member will choose an organization for first assignment (organizational analysis).

Apply assignment instructions to your organization and your coalition.

For information on SB 2, visit: http://www.chcf.org/sb2/index.cfm