WHAT IS HEALTH POLICY?

“Health policy refers to decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific health care goals within a society,” states the World Health Organization. Health care policy is a complex issue and encompasses more than a national law, policy, program or initiative. Once a law is in place regarding health, “Operational policies are the rules, regulations, guidelines, and administrative norms that governments use to translate national laws and policies into programs and services. The policy process encompasses decisions made at a national or decentralized level (including funding decisions) that affect whether and how services are delivered.” This field also includes world-wide public health policies such as vaccination policy, access to care, quality of care and health equity. Opportunities for graduates exist across all sectors and include work on the international, federal, state, or local level, as well as in nonprofits.

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_policy

KEY SKILLS NEED

→ Passionate for serving those in need
→ Specific policy knowledge and experience
→ Knowledge of the legislative process
→ Strong analytical, statistical and evaluations skills
→ Strong advocacy and written/oral communication skills
→ Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to listen to and understand a variety of perspectives
→ Ability to facilitate and work with various parties who may have differing view points
→ Strong project management skills
→ Budget and financial management
→ Well-developed problem solving skills
→ Superior leadership, collaboration and teamwork skills

GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

• United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)— The USDA provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management. They have a vision to provide economic opportunity through innovation, helping rural America to thrive; to promote agriculture production that better nourishes Americans while also helping feed others throughout the world; and to preserve our Nation’s natural resources through conservation, restored forests, improving watersheds, and healthy private working lands.

• USDA: Agricultural Research Service (ARS) — Works to ensure that Americans have reliable, adequate supplies of high-quality food and other agricultural products.

• USDA: Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) – works to improve the health and well-being of Americans by developing and promoting dietary guidance that links scientific research to the nutrition need of costumers.
- **USDA: Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)** – This is the public health agency in the USDA responsible for ensuring that the nation’s commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged.

- **USDA: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)** – This branch is responsible for conducting monthly and annual surveys and preparing official USDA data and estimates of production, supply, prices, and other information necessary to maintain agricultural operations.

- **USDA: National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)** – Their goal is to advance knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and wellbeing, and communities by supporting research, education, and extension programs in the Land-Grant University System and other partner organizations.

- **USDA: Office of Congressional Relations (OCR)** – Serves as the Department’s liaison with Members of Congress and their staffs.

- **USDA: Rural Development (RD)** – Rural Development’s financial programs support such essential public facilities and services as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities and electric and telephone service.

**USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)** - USDA Food and Nutrition Service Headquarters: Provides children and needy families get better access to food and a more healthful diet through its food assistance programs and comprehensive nutrition education efforts.

- **USDA/FNS: Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)** – Federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans, including elderly people, by providing them with emergency food and nutrition assistance and no cost.

- **USDA/FNS: School Meals** – This program provides healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to the nation’s children.

- **USDA/FNS: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – Offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities.

- **USDA/FNS: Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program**: Food, Nutrition counseling, and access to health services to low-income women, infants, and children under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women.

**US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** - It is the mission of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans. We fulfill that mission by providing for effective health and human services and fostering advances in medicine, public health, and social services.

- **HHS: Administration for Children & Families (ACF)** – Promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities with partnerships, funding, guidance, training and technical assistance.

- **HSS: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHROQ)** – Their mission is to produce evidence to make health care safer, higher quality, more accessible, equitable, and affordable.

- **HHS: Center for Disease Control (CDC)** – Charged with protecting public health and safety by developing and promoting disease prevention and control, education, occupational health and safety, environmental health, and injury protection.

- **HSS: Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** – Protects the public health by assuring the safety, efficacy and
security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, our nation’s food supply, cosmetics, and products that emit radiation.

- **HSS: Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)** – Primary Federal agency for improving health and achieving health equity through access to quality service, a skilled health workforce and innovative programs.
- **HSS/CDC: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP)** – Reduce the burden on non-communicable disease, injuries, disabilities, and environmental health hazards.

**Other Federal Agencies:**

- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** – Charged with protecting human health and the environment. Writes and enforces regulations under federal environmental statutes, largely in consultation with state, local, and tribal governments.

**State Agencies:**

- **Missouri Department of Mental Health:** The Department of Mental Health serves approximately 170,000 Missourians annually through state-operated facilities and contracts with private organizations and individuals.
- **Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services:** This Department serves the citizens of Missouri by working to improve the health and quality of life for all Missourians of all ages.
- **Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS):** DSS is responsible for coordinating programs to provide public assistance to children and their parents, access to health care, child support enforcement assistance and to provide specialized assistance to troubled youth.

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- **Center for Strategic & International Studies, Global Health (CSIS)** – A smart, strategic, long-term global health policy that will advance U.S.’s core interests, build on remarkable recent successes, and create lasting collaborations that could save and life the lives of millions worldwide.
- **Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD)** – Fund, develop, and facilitate innovative research collaborations between low- and middle-income and high-income countries in the fight against chronic diseases.
- **Global Health Council** – Engages with the global health community around today’s more important global health priorities.
- **Health Care without Harm:** Works with hospitals to adopt food procurement policies that provide nutritionally improved food for patients, staff, visitors, and the general public. Creates food systems that are ecologically sounds, and economically viable, and socially responsible.
- **Oxfam International Secretariat:** Helps those who live in poverty to be able to exercise their human rights, assert their dignity as full citizens, and take control of their lives.
- **UNICEF** – The leading humanitarian and development agency working globally for the rights of every child.
- **World Health Organization (WHO)** – The directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. Provides leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries, and monitoring and assessing health trends.
**NONPROFITS**

- **AIDS Action Committee** – AIDS Action Committee is a leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS, advocating at the city, state, and federal levels for fair and effective AIDS policies, conducting cutting edge HIV prevention programs, and providing health and wellness services to people already living with HIV.

- **American Cancer Society** – At the American Cancer Society, employees are the soul of the lifesaving mission to finish the fight against cancer. Their employees work across federal, state, and local jurisdictions to support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

- **American Diabetes Association** - To prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

- **American Public Health Association (APHA)** – Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play.

- **American Red Cross** – Provides compassionate care to those in need. Their networks of donors, volunteers and employees share a mission of preventing and relieving suffering, here at home and around the world.

- **CANFIT (Communities-Adolescents-Nutrition-Fitness)** - Builds community leadership and stimulating change at multiple levels, from individual behavior to public policy. Helps advance sustainable change in low-income communities and communities of color.

- **ChangeLab Solution (formerly Public Health Law and Policy)**: Works with neighborhoods, cities, and states to transform communities with laws and policies that create lasting change.

- **Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)** – A consumer advocacy organization whose twin missions are to conduct innovation research and advocacy programs in health and nutrition.

- **Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund** – National civil rights law and policy center directed by individuals with disabilities and parents who have children with disabilities.

- **Disability Rights International** – Dedicated to promoting the human rights and full participation in a society of children and adults with disabilities worldwide.

- **Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)** – GLAD is the cutting edge of the historic fight for full equality and justice. Through impact litigation, education and public policy work, GLAD’s precedent-setting work has established anti-discrimination laws for transgender, gay, lesbian and bisexual people and protected the rights of those with HIV throughout New England.

- **Health Law Advocates (HLA)** – HLA is a 501(c)(3) public interest law firm whose mission is to provide *pro bono* legal representation to low-income residents experiencing difficulty accessing or paying for needed medical services. HLA is committed to ensuring universal access to quality health care, particularly for those who are most at risk due to such factors as race, gender, disability, age, or geographic location.

- **Medicare Rights Center** – A national non-profit consumer service organization that works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through counselling and advocacy, educational programs and public policy initiatives.

- **National Health Council (NHC)** – Harnesses the collective power of the patient community to address systemic health care issues that affect all patients.
• **Partners HealthCare** – Across Partners, they’re helping to advance health care in important ways, such as finding new ways to apply technology to patient care, facilitating discoveries in biomedicine, and demonstrating ways to make the delivery of health care more accessible, safe, and efficient.

• **Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA):** Devoted to working with the private sector to ensure the health of our nation’s youth by solving the childhood obesity crisis.

**Regional/Local Organizations:**

• **ABT Associates:** A mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development.

• **Health Network of Missouri:** Structured to allow members to work together as partners on common goals while enabling each hospital or health system to serve the health care needs of its own community and preserve its independence and unique identity.

• **Missouri Foundation for Health:** Missouri Foundation for Health is a resource for the region, working with communities and nonprofits to generate and accelerate positive changes in health. As a catalyst for change, MFH improves the health of Missourians through partnership, experience, knowledge, and funding.

• **Missouri Health Care Association:** The Association is dedicated to improving quality of life for the residents of long term care.

• **Missouri Hospital Association:** MHA represents every acute care hospital in the state, as well as most of the federal and state hospitals and rehabilitation and psychiatric care facilities.

**FELLOWSHIP & GRANTS – GIVING ORGANIZATIONS**

• **Families USA Fellowship Programs** – Sponsors a fellowship for graduates focused on health care advocacy work and health care justice issues.

• **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** – Seeks to improve the health and health care of all Americans. Help society transform itself for the better.

• **W.K. Kellogg Foundation** – Awards grants to support children, families, and communities as they strengthen and create conditions to help the larger community and society.

**FOOD LISTSERVES**

• **CDC Public Health Law News:** Monthly e-mail digest of current, worldwide news stories, court opinions, announcements, and special features related to public health law and legislation.