

Policy, Politics and Global Health

Name

Institution

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Introduction

Policies in nursing profession have an impact on the patients and the caregivers. The quality of care and access to resources are also greatly influenced by the several policies that are formulated and implemented by various health agencies and regulators. The subject of this essay is the discussion of primary healthcare policy in the US health system particularly the policies involving the affordability, accessibility and quality of health services as outlined in the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Affordability of Primary Healthcare

Affordability of the primary care is an essential aspect of any healthcare system and as such should consist of relevant policies and reforms to ensure that equality and quality of the care process are achieved through the various care facilities and professionals. Affordability of a primary care system is chosen as a subject of this essay due to the fact healthcare is one of the most expensive services in the whole world. Parks (2012) for instance emphasizes the importance of creating awareness regarding health reforms especially on the affordability among the care professionals. The cost of care not only affects the patients who cannot access quality services but also the health professionals who have to deal with emotional issues in case a patient has been turned away without being attended due to lack of necessary medical insurance cover or means of footing bills.

Relevance of Affordability Policy to the Nursing Profession

The affordability of primary healthcare policy is relevant to the nursing profession majorly because the nurses being the primary caregivers are confronted with the reality of the sufferings of the individuals who cannot afford treatment and care for their illnesses and other

conditions. The policy is also relevant to the nursing profession since the affordability of healthcare increases the demand for care. Increased demand will require an equivalent rise in the number of nurses needed to deliver the required needed. Anderson (2014) on evaluating the impact of ACA on the healthcare personnel indicates that the expected increase of 30 million to 34 million individuals with insurance cover may compromise the quality of care due to the restrained healthcare system. The system that was originally designed to maintain an only specific number of nurses may thus have a significant effect. A policy change in the affordability of the care system relates to the nurses as they have to deal with the surges of patients after being insured. The workforce shortage in the nursing profession is thus a reality when the demand for health services is increased. The need for more primary providers is thus a challenge in the expansion of a care plan.

According to Auerbach, et al. (2013) nurses make up the largest percentage, up to 80% of the healthcare workforce. The affordability of the primary care policy is, therefore, relevant to the nursing profession since the nurses who are on the frontline of the health service delivery should be involved when reforming the various issues of healthcare such as costs and quality.

The Financial Impact of the Affordable Primary Healthcare Policy on the Community

Healthcare expenses are some of the biggest cost centers of the budgetary allocations on the national and federal levels. Communities with no proper policies and guidelines concerning the health are bound to collapse due to high costs incurred on the health system. A cost effective health is beneficial to the various financially disadvantaged groups and individuals in the society who cannot afford the costs of high fees paid on to acquire the basic health services. The financial impact on the government and other agencies that fund the subsidized health programs is increased spending on such programs. Diversion of funds may also be experienced in a bid to

sustain the affordable primary healthcare reforms. Individuals spending on medical services are however reduced substantially due to the cheapness of such reforms.

Ethical Principle

The moral law that forms the basis for the formulation of affordable primary healthcare policy is justice. Provision of quality and equitable healthcare is a fundamental social justice in which every member of the community is entitled to the accessibility of proper health services. The state is supposed to provide health services to all the citizens irrespective of their background and social status. I consider it unfair and social injustice for individuals to succumb to illnesses that could be easily managed just because they could not afford the basic healthcare. It is also unethical for the disadvantaged groups to suffer while the government and other policy makers do not enact strategies to provide affordable and quality primary healthcare to all the citizens and members of the community. Good health is an essential part of human life, and it is imperative that an individual's personal dignity, as well as physical integrity, is respected and treated fairly by the relevant authorities.

Policy Brief

The affordable basic healthcare policy is formulated in this paper so as to increase the accessibility of quality care while addressing the issues arising due to the expansion of health covers such as strained workforce. This section, therefore, discusses the role of the federal governments as the major decisions and policy while highlighting the challenges that may arise in the process of implementing the proposed strategies. The policy chosen is aimed at addressing affordable healthcare in Ohio State.

The Decision Maker

The state Ohio's department of health consists of a division that is tasked with analyzing critical health trends and communicating with policy makers based on current research. The Ohio Institute of Health Policy (HPIO) is also responsible for collaborating with the state agencies and other decision-makers. This policy brief will be addressed to Amy Rohling McGee who is the president of HPIO on behalf of the state health department and of the executive council responsible for implementing the various health policies.

Primary Policy Options Available to Amy Rohling McGee

Some of the major interventions provided for the decision maker mainly aims at eliminating the barriers to affordable healthcare. The obstacles may include shortages of healthcare workforce and other resources as well as insurance status. Distance and challenges in transportation may also be considered as significant barriers to affordable and accessible healthcare. The primary options available to Amy Rohling McGee may include health insurance coverage options and intervention. The insurance strategies regard formulation of policies that increases the affordability medical covers to low-income individuals. Establishment of effective rate review systems should also be done as an option for ensuring that the services are charged at reasonable and affordable rates.

Options in public health coverage programs such as Medicaid are also available to the decision maker. In working with such strategies involving Medicaid, the policy decision maker should consider points such as discussing the pros and cons of developing the ACA programs. Strengthening of Medicaid provider network is also necessary to assist in the reimbursement of primary care services. Some other options that available include adopting payment and care delivery strategies that reduce costs while improving health outcomes or results. Such options

may entail innovations that encourage the development of coordinated care models. The coordinated care models facilitate the delivery of high-value health services.

The options provided for Amy Rohling McGee are tangible as they have been formulated based on evidence from important studies. The interventions are also feasible as they take into consideration the various factors such as financial status of the organization and availability of resources that are required to implement the proposed policy. Finally, it can be seen that the options are in line with the country's affordable care strategies and legislations.

Why the Affordability of the Primary Healthcare Policy Requires the Attention of the HPIO

The affordability of essential care services needs an immediate attention of the Ohio health policy department for two primary reasons: first, due to the gaps in accessibility and costs in the current affordability policy, ACA in America and Ohio in particular. The second reason to consider this policy brief is due to the fact that healthcare costs are some of the highest in an economy basing on the premise the more affordable the health system is the more populations become healthy and productive in daily life.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 was a health reform policy enrolled in the country to reduce the costs of health care by increasing the number of citizens registered in the various health schemes. Despite the fact that ACA has brought several benefits to the American healthcare disadvantages and constraints have been observed with working with the policy. Millions of individuals have gained access to healthcare however according to Shartzter, Long, and Anderson (2015) still establishes gaps in access and affordability of health services across the various income segments. Despite the improvements in access to healthcare by the policy between its inceptions up to now, the authors report that 25.7% of nonelderly adults indicated

that they did not have the usual source of care. The disadvantaged groups as shown in the study were likely to be 18 to 29 years of age male individuals from Hispanic background. Lack of an established usual source of care is an indication of a realized access to essential health services.

Based on the findings by Moses et al (2013) lack of access to care is often caused by persistent inadequate insurance covers that are not affordable by the populations or sections of the community who may be disadvantaged. Various economic studies indicate that the effects of inflation are experienced in the consumer health with rising costs being witnessed. Due to the increase in costs it can be seen that Americans with low income are deciding to forgo the essential medical services like optional surgery or routine checkups. Financial anxiety thus contributes to the decline in the number of individuals visiting the doctors. Increased cost prices of drugs, medical equipment, and health care are seen as the primary causes of the inflation healthcare (Purnell et al., 2016). However, it can also be noted that policies regarding taxation and regulation by government authorities to be a significant impact on the affordability of the primary healthcare. The policy brief presented here thus require the attention of the Ohio policy decision makers so as to formulate and implement interventions that are aimed at cushioning the state health sector against the adverse effects of inflation and other macroeconomic aspects.

Challenges in Addressing Primary Health Care Cost Policy

Primary health care industry faces many challenges in an attempt to provide the necessary health services to the masses. One major challenge arising when formulating and implementing affordable care policies is the limited financial resources. The macroeconomic environmental factors largely affect the health sector by having an impact on the flow of funds from the governmental budgetary agencies. Affordable care cannot be realistic when the costs of drugs, medical equipment and other services are high (Purnell et al., 2016). The challenge thus

arises in the fact that the listed elements are most of the time beyond the control of the policymakers but are subject to larger economic dynamics. Changes in demographical aspects such as variations and unequal income present majorly challenge for implementation since individuals will present unique needs. The politics and legal frameworks may also pose problems due to strict regulations and opposition from different quarters. The stakeholders may be opposed to the proposed policy just because of the difference in ideologies making the implementation of the program to be difficult. Another constraint that may arise is the shortage of the physicians and other primary care providers that can be put in place to meet the rising health needs of the population.

Primary Interventions to the Increasing Primary Health Care Costs

Some of the recommended strategies include programs to support physicians and other primary care careers as an intervention against the shortages of such professionals that contribute to high costs of care. The federal government should laws and programs that enables and empowers the health providers regarding the national expenditures on health. Such policies should be aimed at increasing the allocations of funds made to the sector. The state government should establish a permanent budgetary commission whose duties should include controlling the spending and utilization of health resources. It is also imperative that the health departments to form strategic partnerships with relevant bodies such as medical suppliers and other stakeholders so as to develop cost-effective mechanisms aimed at providing quality and affordable care (Parks, 2012). Partnering with insurance providers is also necessary in attempting to achieve affordability of the sector. The government should form an interdisciplinary taskforce whose role is to investigate and appraise various cost saving techniques through knowledge application. The

proposed interventions are realistic since they involve engagement of different stakeholders who possess significant influence on the functioning of the health system.

Proposed Course of Action

Affordability of basic health care is not only an essential economic goal but also a step of achieving a healthy and productive population. The proposed plan entails making the coverage more secure for those who are already insured while extending insurance to the uninsured with an aim of reducing the premiums and out-of-pocket expenses incurred in accessing the health services. The plan further involves the reduction of healthcare costs by development of effective strategies and mechanisms. It is strongly recommended and necessary that the institute consider implementing this proposed plan. Adopting the policy will help to solve the problems associated with increasing health costs. The strategy will also contribute to avoid the challenges faced in dealing with affordable care policies. By adopting this policy the Ohio health department stands to benefit from increased efficiency as well as satisfaction from the delivery of quality services to the masses. I therefore strongly appeal that the health policy institute to adopt this plan bearing in mind the many Americans who cannot afford healthcare due to high costs.

Top-down Approach for Evaluating the Policy Brief

The evaluation of the policy will be based on the assessment of the intervention procedures by considering the various aspects of the objectives to ensure that the program objectives are implemented in line with total quality management standards (Hupe & Hill, 2015). The top-down approach will be used to assess the risks and costs that are associated with the implementation of the policy while appraising the benefits of the program at each execution step. The policy designers are the main participants in the evaluation process.

Organization

Several groups have expressed interest in affordable primary healthcare policy. This policy can work together with the Alliance for Health Reform as the major institutional partner. The organization is known for its mission of attaining high quality and affordable healthcare for all Americans. The interest of the group can be seen in the form of several briefings and toolkits on the affordability of healthcare, for instance, the publications on healthcare costs in the US. The goals of Alliance for Health Reform align with the objectives of this policy since they both seek to provide affordable healthcare to majority of the American population while accessing quality health services. The interventions to ensure achievement of the shared goals include knowledge sharing and brainstorming to identify the key issues regarding the policy. It will be imperative that findings of the plan to be disseminated among all the partners. The roles that will be performed by the partnering organization include capacity building while providing resources regarding research literature. The organization will also provide an oversight on the implementation of the proposed strategies.

The approach that is going to be applied in collaboration with the organization will involve three principles that include recognizing the identity of the group as a unit. It is also necessary that integration of knowledge for the benefit of the partnership in effort to actually implement the plan of action. The third principle that will be used is the capitalization on the strengths and resources within the organization. Some of the fundamental elements in developing a collaborative evaluation plan include integrative of skills to create synergy. It is also imperative that the partnership to be based on a cyclical and iterative process.

Bottom-up Approach for Evaluation of the Program Outcomes

The collaborative program will be evaluated using the bottom-up approach in which an integrative validity shall be measured. The bottom-up technique is used to assess the outcome of the program while taking into consideration the various factors including how the program intervention were formulated and implemented (Hupe & Hill, 2015). Target groups and deliverers of the health services who are the actual implementers of the proposed policy will be engaged so as to ascertain the success or failure of the program with the success based on the willingness and extent implementation of the program by the stakeholders. The stakeholders will also be required to provide a feedback regarding the key indicators or measures of the outcomes. The policymakers and implementers from the various sectors and relating agencies will also be engaged to obtain the overall performance indicators of the program.

Strengths and Challenges of Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches in Achieving Policy Change

Top-Down Approach

Strengths and Challenges. A notable advantage of the top-down approach is that it helps in developing a standard and consistent policy advice and patterns of behavior that can be applied in different situations. The challenge of using the approach is its tendency to use the statutory language rather than considering the actions that were taken previously.

Bottom-Up Approach

Strengths and Challenges. Some of the benefits of the approach is the emphasis on the actors who are tasked with the implementation of the policy. The goals, participants and plans are integrated in the process of determining the outcomes of a particular program. The challenges observed in such approaches are that they do not present prescriptive advice but instead describe the constraints encountered in attempt to achieve the goals of the different policies (Hupe & Hill,

2015). Another weakness that the bottom-up approach has been associated with is their tendency to overemphasize the autonomy of the local participants. Further challenges are seen in the approach is the exercising of the policy control by the local actors whose authority may be vested upon by the sovereign voters a situation that does not give any power to the service deliverers.

The most effective approach that is recommended for addressing the affordability of the primary health care policy is the bottom-up approach in which the implementation of the policies involves the engagement of all the participants from various levels. Involvement of the actors such as health deliverers in evaluation is essential as feedback on the reality is obtained regarding the policy.

Conclusion

In retrospect, it can be said that effective policies are needed to ensure affordability of the primary healthcare. The policy brief presented in this study provides interventions for ensuring that the majority of the American populations have access to affordable and quality care.

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