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# Memo Workshop

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# Memo Workshop- Outline

- Brief Overview of Science Policy and Policy Memos
  - Policy, Science Policy and Policy Analysis
  - Different views and roles of a policy analyst
  - Goals, format, types of policy memos
- Review Policy Memos and Discuss/Critique
  - Provide background, review in small groups, entire group discusses
  - Examples: Biodefense, Cures Act (Cures Consortium)
- Review an Advocacy Memo and Discuss/Critique
  - Provide background, review in small groups, entire group discusses
  - Example: Tobacco research exemption



# A quick primer on science policy (*one perspective*)

## What Is a Policy?

Outlines a course of action for consistently dealing with an issue- government, private sector, university, NGOs



# What Is Public Policy?

Government action to address public  
“problems”

It's what government does  
(at all levels)

# Some Policy “Tools” Memos will Consider

- Tax incentives or breaks
- Subsidies
- Regulation
- Education
- R&D Programs



# Science Policy: Context

Impact of policy (including funding) on science and R&D enterprise: research/science/public health priorities, workforce, training/education, infrastructure, innovation, ethics, regulatory environment, healthcare, technology development

Science informing policy (science-based policy-one aspect): through analysis, recommendations, development, implementation and evaluation at different levels of government (roles for scientists in policy making)

# Politics vs. Policy and Science Policy vs. Science Advocacy

Politics—impacts creation of policy, but more about power and influence- politicians, lobbying, advocacy, negotiations

Policy process- development, analysis, recommendations and implementation-- linked to politics in varying degrees depending on your role and position in the process

Same aspects to consider in science/health policy and science/health policy careers. Whether in Executive Branch, Congress, local government, academia, associations, foundations, patient organizations, think tanks—

Distinction between Science Policy vs. Science Advocacy

# Policy Analysis

Analysis to dissect problems and solutions. A systematic method for studying-

- Problems – nature and scope
- Proposals, policy alternatives – possible actions
- Policy outcomes - implemented policies

Good policy analysis leads to better policy

Evaluation is key-

*Did the policy address the problem?*

*Did it impinge too much on our freedoms?*

*Could it be carried out/implemented?*

*Unintended consequences?*

**Policy memos should include some level of analysis**

**Consider different roles and views of policy/program analysts**





**Table 3.1** *Three Views on the Appropriate Role of the Policy Analyst*

	Fundamental Values		
	Analytical Integrity	Responsibility to Clients	Adherence to One's Conception of Good
<b>Objective Technician</b>	Let analysis speak for itself. Primary focus should be predicting consequences of alternative policies.	Clients are necessary evils; their political fortunes should be secondary considerations. Keep distance from clients; select institutional clients whenever possible.	Relevant values should be identified but trade-offs among them should be left to clients. Objective advice promotes good in the long run.
<b>Client's Advocate</b>	Analysis rarely produces definitive conclusions. Take advantage of ambiguity to advise clients' positions.	Clients provide analysts with legitimacy. Loyalty should be given in return for access to privileged information and to political processes.	Select clients with compatible value systems; use long-term relationships to change clients' conceptions of good.
<b>Issue Advocate</b>	Analysis rarely produces definitive conclusions. Emphasize ambiguity and excluded values when analysis does not support advocacy.	Clients provide an opportunity for advocacy. Select them opportunistically; change clients to further personal policy agenda.	Analysis should be an instrument for progress toward one's conception of the good society.



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# S&T and Health Policy Roles



INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE  
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**APHA**

AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
*For science. For action. For health.*



**NAAS**

ADVANCING SCIENCE, SERVING SOCIETY



**CDC**

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



**LOCKHEED MARTIN**



**Booz | Allen | Hamilton**



**FASEB**  
Federation of A  
for Experimentation



**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

# Policy Memos

- Can take several forms depending on the issue and audience- from more extensive white paper to 1-page memo
- Value in developing 1-page policy memos
  - Most of us are familiar with more extensive research articles and white papers
  - A one page memo is a common format and a useful skill
- These are not narratives or research articles (although involve research & rely on policy research), sometimes in bullet format
- Designed for a policy maker that may not have the technical background --*know your audience/client!!*
- Utilize short, crisp, clear language with limited jargon

# Policy memo tips\* (and suggestions for contest)

Memos generally include the following major elements:

- Executive Summary/Overview
  - Often first section, but developed at the very end
  - Very briefly outlines thought process and recommendations
- Background/Problem Statement
  - Defines the problem/issue, why it is a concern, context and introduces policy options to address the issue
- Policy Options/Alternatives
  - Analyze policy options and project outcomes, describing criteria for analysis
  - Acknowledge deficiencies and confront tradeoffs
- Recommendations
  - Provide clear recommendations based on analysis (considering your audience)

# Policy Memos-Example- DHS

- Background-
  - *Prepare a memo providing advice to the new Secretary of Homeland Security (as a new Department) for short-term and long-term strategies to address the threat of Biological Weapons.*
- Review
- Discuss--consider pros and cons

# Policy Memos-Example- DHS

- Will depend on the nature of the question or issue
  - Action on specific policy, proposal or legislation
  - Broader question on how to address an issue
- Pros
  - Clear set of short-term and long-term recommendations
  - Identify specific actions and responsible programs
- Cons
  - Should outline tradeoffs and consider additional prioritization (and use memo format)
  - Could use more quantitative data for support and impact (including any budget estimates)



# Policy Memos-Example- Cures Consortium

- Background

- *You are a staff member of a Representative serving on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Earlier this year (2015) the Committee released a 21st Century Cures legislation discussion document. Among several proposals, an "Innovative Cures Consortium" (Title II, Subtitle A) is included. The Representative has requested you prepare a one-page policy memo reviewing/assessing this specific proposal (and relevant background) and advise if they should support this section.*

- Review

- Discuss--consider pros and cons

# Policy Memos-Example- Cures Consortium

- More targeted question to address
- Pros
  - Clear, concise
  - Points out potential redundancy
- Cons
  - Could provide more details in background and outline consortium structure
  - Other very similar activities are not mentioned- Foundation for NIH, Reagan Udall Foundation for the FDA



# Advocacy Memo or Letter

- Takes a position
- Encourages specific action or outcome on an issue
- Concise and clear
- Persuasive
- Generally, focus is on one side of an issue (unless discrediting a specific argument from the other side)
- Often specific to one topic/bill – Memo in Support/Memo in Opposition
- Can utilize similar format as policy memo

# Advocacy Memos-Example- S.5300

- Background--*Exemptions for research tobacco products (support for proposed NYS legislation). Previously considered exempt, but NYS now requiring manufacturer to register as certified manufacturer.*
- Review
- Discuss--consider pros and cons



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Questions??