Translating data into policy: Ensuring your research generates impact

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Broad definition of policy =
Moving people and systems in a direction you want them to go
The policy big picture

Policy

Advocacy

Lobbying
Dimensions of policy

• **Different:**
  • Levels of influence
    • Local, state, federal
    • Little “p” versus big “P” policy
  • Environments
    • Academics, government think tanks, associations, foundations, advocacy organizations
  • Approaches
    • Conducting research and translation; engaging communities and stakeholders; informing legislation and regulation; setting budgets; designing and implementing programs
  • Issues
    • Appreciate when an issue is “hot” – timing is **essential**
    • Goal = time your findings to inform an issue at a critical time
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy analysis</td>
<td>The process of identifying, comparing, and prioritizing potential solutions to a defined problem</td>
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<td>Policy mapping</td>
<td>Conducting a landscape analysis of the policy issue(s), pain points, stakeholders, and targets / decision-makers</td>
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<td>Evidence-based policy</td>
<td>The production and/or translation of high-quality data and research to inform the design of policies, programs, and products</td>
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<td>Policy operationalization</td>
<td>Brokering complex policy, political, and programmatic negotiations to move people and systems from ideas to action</td>
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<td>Communicating to policy audiences</td>
<td>The packaging of data and research findings in a clear, accessible way for policy makers through a wide array of policy products</td>
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Policy mapping

• Understand the policy landscape
  • Enriches your knowledge of the issue and what needs to be fixed or enhanced
  • Helps target focused, impactful research
  • Invites stakeholders to be invested in (and anticipate!) your work

• When is the right timing for this?
  • When developing your research proposal.
Evidence-based policy

- Inform evidence-based policy
  - What is the line of sight between your research and the policy you want to change or the policy question you want to inform?
  - How do your research questions need to adapt, anticipating that line of sight?
  - Are there experts in policy operationalization you can invite to join your team?
  - How often do you plan to refresh your policy map throughout the course of your study?
Communicating to policy audiences

• Learn how to communicate to policy audiences
  • “Anec” data → blend stories and data
  • Be clear, simple, straightforward
  • Get comfortable with the best available – not ever – data
• Consider which policy product would work best:
  • Infographic
  • Policy brief
  • Report
• Present elegant policy solutions
A closer look: Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

Act 191 of 2014 provided for the creation of a tool that contains dispensation data of controlled substances, schedules II – V

Ultimate goal = help clinicians make evidence-informed prescribing decisions and to aid regulatory and law enforcement agencies in combatting fraud, abuse, and diversion

In first year, focused team on building reliable database before expanding other programs

- As the 49th state to launch a PDMP, no need to reinvent the wheel!
- Reviewed peer-reviewed literature on benefits of PDMP use to facilitate clinician adoption
- Conducted key informant interviews with PDMP administrators from other states working with our vendor on successes and challenges
- Consulted with Brandeis TTAC for various analyses, including maps, legislation trackers, and best practice checklists
- Engaged peer agencies, community-based organizations, and physicians and pharmacists in informal rapid learning cycles to identify, design, and experiment with PDMP enhancements
- Mentored my team in the practice of evidence-based policy
Launched in August 2016
Policy change and sustainability of interventions

• **Examples**
  - **PA PDMP**
    - Intervention goal – make it as seamless as possible for providers to use the PDMP tool
    - Policy change – secured federal dollars to create incentive structure with health systems to incorporate PDMP into EHRs
  - **SDOH screening tool**
    - Intervention goal – connect patients to health and social resources they need, which is challenging in the fee-for-service world as a non-billable service
    - Policy change – experimentation in alternative payment models provides a pathway to greater sustainability of these types of services
Policy lessons learned

- Policy versus politics
- Procedures and processes
- Patience
- Persistence
- Perspective

- When is the best time to consider the policy implications of your research?
  - From the very beginning.
Questions

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