Quality Health Care for Vulnerable Populations: Accessibility, Availability, & Affordability
Spring 2013
(3 credits)
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I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course will inform social work students with clinical or social change concentrations, or future professionals in other disciplines, about the full range of health care policy issues faced by their clients, families, and health care providers, and the process of decision-making in our health care systems. Particular emphasis is given to the most vulnerable and underserved populations, including racial and ethnic minorities, children, the elderly, women, and the poor and so-called “near poor.” Students will be introduced to the organization of the U.S. health care system in terms of policy, services, funding streams, and the historical development and current structure of health care policy at the state and national level. Advocacy skills and techniques across the entire advocacy continuum will be addressed. Inequalities in health status and access to quality health care will be explored, with emphasis on the role social workers and others play in addressing these inequalities and inequities. The process of health care decision making by medical staff, patients and families will be examined, and the role of health care professionals in educating medical professionals, patients, and family members and working to meet the needs of the patient and the institution will be addressed.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the implications of health policies for practice in health care and other settings.
2. To understand the historical context of the current health care system in terms of policy, services, and funding.
3. To have essential knowledge concerning the policies, regulations laws, and publicly sponsored entitlements that provide the policy structure for practice in health care.
4. To have a thorough knowledge of the advocacy opportunities across the continuum in health care.
5. To have skills to be an advocate with and for clients, our profession, in agencies and institutions, in communities, through organizations, and in the political and legislative arenas.
6. To understand the biopsychosocialspiritual issues that impact medical decision-making.
7. To understand the role and values of health care professionals in the medical decision-making process, including advocacy to include clients and families in the process and to appreciate the importance of client culture and tradition.
8. To understand the accreditation process for hospitals, nursing homes, mental health settings, and rehabilitation, ambulatory care, and specialty centers.
9. To demonstrate the differences in types of insurance coverage and their impact on people with acute and chronic health problems and on their access to quality care.
10. To understand the issues of disparities, inequities, and inequalities in health care and the roles health care professionals play in redressing them.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts


B. Required Journal and Other Articles

Because of the intense and ongoing public debate related to issues of public health in general and health care reform specifically, the content of this course is constantly updated, even during the semester. Accordingly, additional readings or citations to websites, beyond the required readings that are listed in the Class Schedule for each class, are distributed in class for review and discussion.

C. Recommended Text


D. Course Assignments

Assignments for this class consist of active participation in class, two short papers, and two presentations to peers of 12 - 15 minutes each, as noted below.

Assignment 1 –Students will review the websites of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and similar sites such as the National Committee on Quality Assurance and the American College of Surgeons to understand the purpose accreditation organizations serve and their results in accomplishing increased quality of care. In a paper of 4 - 5 pages students will review quality care criteria as they relate to any one specific area or programmatic component (e. g.,
ambulatory services, clinical laboratories) and assess the rigor of the standard, its achievability, and its likelihood of enhancing quality care. **Due at Class 4, February 7, 2013.**

Assignment 2 – Students will review such websites as those of the American Public Health Association, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Kaiser family of health reform and health insurance resources, including [http://www.kff.org/](http://www.kff.org/), [http://kaiseredu.org/health_reform_index.asp](http://kaiseredu.org/health_reform_index.asp), and [http://healthreform.kff.org/](http://healthreform.kff.org/), the American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association, the American Enterprise Institute, and others as discussed in class to understand various health care issues of continuing national debate, such as the scope of coverage, the scope of benefits, the effect of pre-existing conditions on insurability, the individual mandate, high risk pools, health care exchanges, accountable health care organizations, Medicaid expansion, the essential benefits package, and the like, and in a paper of 5 – 6 pages discuss the history and rationale for any one such issue and the range of opinions, pro and con. **Due at Class 8, March 14, 2013.**

Assignment 3 – Based on your review of the readings for, and lectures and discussions at, class on health insurance coverage through employers or through government programs, and inequities and inequalities as they may pertain to people of color and different ethnicities, women, children, the elderly, or immigrants, including an in-class exercise on developing a health insurance coverage policy, choose one issue to focus on that would constitute an improvement over the status quo. Limit yourself to either one population group (e.g., children) or program (e.g., Medicaid) or one issue (e.g., portability), as depth is more important than breadth. Develop an outline, including as appropriate the history of the problem or issue, barriers to change, ethical issues, the role of the social work professional, and resources available to help deal with this issue. At class on the day of the presentation, students will provide the instructor with a written copy of their outline and give a 12 to 15 minute presentation on the issue they have chosen. **Presentations will be made during Class 9, on March 21, 2013.**

Assignment 4 – Decision Making: Students will identify a decision making issue in health care, present the history of the issue, the role of the health professional in the decision making process, the barriers for patients in dealing with this issue, resources available to help health care workers deal with this issue, and ethical issues related to the issue. At class on the day of the presentation, students will provide the instructor with a written copy of their outline and give a 12 to 15 minute presentation on the issue they have chosen. **Presentations will be made during the last class, on May 2, 2013.**

**Participation:** Each student is responsible for active oral class involvement on weekly assigned readings and interactive discussions on materials distributed in class for group exercises. Presentation of point of view and the arguments supporting them are expected and encouraged at each class. **Due Date: each class**

E. **Grading Policy**

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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
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<td>Assignment 2</td>
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Assignment 3 30%
Assignment 4 40%
Attendance and Participation 10%

Grades for the course are based on the University grading system. Each grade is based on content (substance, attention to assignment, attention to page limit), style (scholarly writing style, APA format), and timely submission.

F. Attendance and Participation
Students are required to attend classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussions. Active involvement and presentation by each student of his or her point of view and the arguments supporting them are expected and encouraged at each class. The grade for attendance and participation will be lowered unless the student notifies the instructor and requests an excused absence before the class.

G. Course and Instructor Evaluation
NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations using your CUA username and password. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations
Please refer to the appropriate Program Handbook (available on the NCSSS web page), for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading. It is expected that all assignments will be submitted on the due date. Failure to submit work on time will result in a lowered grade, unless there has been an alternate arrangement with the professor prior to the due date of the assignment.

B. Academic Honesty
Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. Accommodations
Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.
## CLASS SCHEDULE

### CLASS TOPIC AND READINGS

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<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
<td><strong>Financing Health Care</strong>&lt;br&gt;Health Insurance&lt;br&gt;Nursing Homes&lt;br&gt;Hospice and Palliative Care&lt;br&gt;Gaps; Filling the Gaps&lt;br&gt;Disparities; Equity&lt;br&gt;Role of Social Workers</td>
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Medicare 101
http://www.kaiseredu.org/tutorials/Medicare101_2006/player.html

Medicaid 101: The Basics
http://www.kaiseredu.org/tutorials/medicaidbasics2009/player.html


Huxley, M., Millstein, R., & Straub, N. (1972). Working Paper #1, A typology of the presenting problems of nursing home patients. Ombudsmen for nursing homes, a report prepared for the President’s Nursing Home Program – DHEW, 73 – 81 (This will be distributed in class.)

Martin, A. & Wolford, F. (1972). Discussion draft for working paper #2, Patients’ bill of rights. Ombudsmen for nursing homes, a report prepared for the President’s Nursing Home Program – DHEW, 85 – 88 (This will be distributed in class.)

Moniz & Gorin, Chapters 4, 5, and 6

4 Accreditation of Health Care Settings; Role of Social Work in Health Care

Multidisciplinary Teams

Building Alliances

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) http://www.jcaho.org
Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) http://www.carf.org/
National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) http://ncqa.org
American College of Surgeons http://www.facs.org/about/corppro.html


5 Advocacy for the Uninsured


Moniz & Gorin – Chapter 9

Association of Oncology Social Work (2001). *Oncology Social Work Toolbox: Building Advocacy Skills* (This will be distributed in class.)

6 & 7 Disparities and Inequalities in Access to Health Care

Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities
Disparities in Women, Children, and the Elderly
Role of the Profession in Advocating for Inclusion and Non-Discriminatory Access and Quality


Race, Ethnicity and Health Care

Moniz & Gorin, Chapters 7 and 8


8 Health Care Reform: What Is It, and Is It Needed

Reform
National Health Insurance
Poverty Guidelines
Minimum Wage Laws
Unemployment and Underemployment
Insurance and Underinsurance
Disparities and Inequalities
Toward a National Health Plan

Handouts at Class 7 for purposes of assignment due at Class 8, discussion at Class 8, and preparation of student presentations at Class 9:
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, *Medical Expenditure Panel Survey*, Statistical Brief #265
Letter to Support Immigrant Inclusion in Health Care Reform (Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research, signatory, July 2009)
Kaiser health reform resources, in general: http://kaiseredu.org/health_reform_index.asp
Kaiser study on cost of health insurance:
   http://ehbs.kff.org/?utm_source=kff&utm_medium=homepage_nn&utm_campaign=nn_091509_ehbs

9  **Student Presentations on Designing a National Insurance Policy; Unemployment, Substance Abuse, and Other Health and Social Problems.**
Implications of unemployment for substance abuse behaviors. Relationship of unemployment and discontinuation of health insurance benefits. Interrelationship of a cascade of negative behaviors. Role of the military services and the VA in the treatment of active and retired service personnel and their families.


10  **Advocacy Across the Health Care Continuum; Health Insurance Coverage for Substance Abuse**
Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Care

Medicaid and implications of potential Medicaid changes. The effect of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and its Parity Act provisions for substance abuse treatment, and the implications of potential changes or repeal. Military and VA substance abuse coverage.


11 Quality Care


12 & 13 Decision Making
Living Wills
Surrogate Decision Making
Informed Decisions
Futile Treatment


14 Student Presentations on Decision-Making