

The Policy-Based Profession

An Introduction to Social Welfare Policy Analysis for Social Workers











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Preface

For the seventh edition of *The Policy-Based Profession: An Introduction to Social Welfare Policy Analysis for Social Workers,* Dr. Robert Leighninger, editor of the *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare,* has been added as a named author. Bob has, in fact, been a shadow author since the very first edition of this book, but as his contribution has slowly grown, it has become obvious that he deserves formal recognition. Thanks to Bob for everything he has contributed to this book.

This book is written for students at both the baccalaureate and master's level of social work education. It is organized into four sections. The first outlines a policy-based model of the social work profession that explicitly recognizes the social welfare policy system as a major factor in social work practice, and in fact as a defining criterion of the social work profession. The second section presents a model of policy analysis that divides the task into three major facets of the policy context: historical, economic, and social. The third section of the book applies the policy analysis framework to representative policies and policy issues in the fields of public welfare, aging, mental health, substance abuse, health, child welfare, and immigration. The final section, "Taking Action" expands the book's treatment of the increasingly important area of politics and social welfare policy, and the social work profession's continually increasing emphasis on policy practice as an area of interest.

The previous edition of this book included, for the first time, a chapter on health policy. This was done, of course, in recognition of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) as an important addition to our country's safety net. Because we now have Donald Trump as president and the Republicans control both houses of Congress, the ACA is under serious attack, although all indications are that the act will prove much more resilient that its attackers ever imagined. Because health care is one of the major social welfare policy areas currently in play, we have made significant revisions, updates, and expansions to the health policy chapter.

For the seventh edition we have added, also for the first time, a chapter on immigration policy. We have done this for two major reasons. One is that immigration is now front and center as a major social justice issue with the current president's attempts to restrict immigration by proposing to build a wall on the border with Mexico and by placing what amounts to a ban on immigrants from majority Muslim countries. The second reason, of course, is that many social work clients are immigrants, and many of them are undocumented, so immigration policy is critical to their well-being; the social workers who assist them must be familiar with this policy area. On a more personal note, all of the authors either currently or recently have been affiliated with universities that are Hispanic-serving institutions. We have watched the struggle of students brought to this country as small children, who have done everything right, who are now earning professional degrees and facing the huge barrier to beginning their careers of being (through no fault of their own) undocumented. We were heartened by President Obama's executive order establishing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals







(DACA) program and are hopeful that Congress will turn it into black letter law. By the time this book is published, the DACA issue will likely have been resolved. Parts of the immigration chapter will undoubtedly remain permanently relevant. This chapter explains that our country has periodically gone through periods of intense anxiety about immigration and has often responded in ways that are not constructive, but it has always emerged from the crisis ever more diverse and ever stronger. We are confident that this will happen once again.

Every chapter in this new edition has been updated to cover the most recent research, theories, and political developments related to each field of practice presented. Significant new material includes the problem of drug dependence among military veterans, the opioid epidemic, and the problem (and often tragic results) of social media bullying. In each area covered, we have purposefully avoided presenting a comprehensive (and soon outdated) overview of all current policies. Rather, our intent has been to choose a current example of a major social welfare issue within each policy area. Using these examples, we have sought to acquaint students with a process and skills for understanding policies that they can continue to apply in their professional practice. We hope that by teaching students to use a policy analysis technique, which we have termed *practitioner policy analysis*, we will equip them with a skill that will be useful throughout their careers and from which they can develop additional policy practice skills.

New to This Edition

The seventh edition of *The Policy-Based Profession: An Introduction to Social Welfare Policy Analysis for Social Workers* has been thoroughly updated to reflect current issues that affect social work policy:

- Content regarding the relevance of historical analysis in social welfare policy analysis has been strengthened (chapter 4).
- In keeping with the increasing emphasis in social work education on teaching
 policy practice skills, the relationship of policy analysis to practice with individuals, families, and small groups has been strengthened throughout.
- The health chapter (chapter 9), while acknowledging that it cannot keep up
 with the ongoing struggle to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, does
 discuss some of the favorite policies of those who favor repeal, specifically
 individual health savings accounts and separate high-risk insurance pools.
 There is also an example of a little discussed health care reform approach—
 concierge medicine.
- This edition includes a new chapter on immigration (chapter II). The chapter discusses the epic drama of our glorious and not-so-glorious history of wave after wave of new arrivals and how each welcomed (or didn't) the next wave. Readers are challenged to decide whether current immigration stimulates or weakens our economy, whether it threatens the jobs of high-tech engineers and construction workers or creates new jobs in both areas, whether keeping the right people out of the country is worse than letting the wrong people in, whether immigrants commit more or fewer crimes than native-born citizens, whether refugees are carefully vetted before being allowed into the country or they just walk in, and other perplexing and debatable issues.
- Additional attention is directed to program evaluation as a policy analysis technique (chapters 10 and 13).







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 Additional case vignettes illustrating the importance of understanding social welfare policy for direct practice social workers have been added throughout.

- Chapter 8 combines and updates the material formerly presented in the separate mental health and substance abuse chapters. The new chapter includes material on the opioid epidemic, problems faced by returning veterans, and recent responses to suicides caused by cyberbullying.
- The seventh edition includes updates on research and theory references, as well as references to the most current material (all chapters).

Pearson Enhanced eText

The seventh edition of The Policy-Based Profession: An Introduction to Social Welfare Policy Analysis for Social Workers includes the following Enhanced eText features:

Check Your Understanding: Embedded assessment questions appear as a link at the end of each major chapter section in the Pearson eText. Using multiple-choice questions, the self-checks allow readers to assess how well they have mastered the content.

Chapter Review: At the end of each chapter, short-answer questions encourage readers to reflect on chapter concepts. We have provided feedback to support the development of thoughtful responses.

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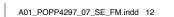
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