

SECTION 6: POLICY AND ADVOCACY





Description

Policy is a plan or course of action designed to define issues, influence decision-making and promote broad community actions for adolescent health beyond those made by individuals. **Policy development** is the process by which society makes decisions about adolescent health, selects goals and the best means for reaching them, handles conflicting views about what should be done and allocates resources to address needs. Policy can be either legislative (e.g. laws, statutes, regulations addressing youth health issues) or programmatic (plans that guide how an agency carries out its roles and responsibilities; these actions often have an impact on adolescent health).

Advocacy is the act of speaking out on issues of concern or arguing in favor of something such as an idea or a policy for adolescent health. It is often a process of educating key stakeholders and decision-makers about adolescents and their health. The goal of advocacy is to create change or action.

This section is divided into 3 Sections or Elements:

- Legislative policy
- Programmatic policy
- Education/Advocacy for action



Background

GOAL:

To identify the roles and constraints for policy and advocacy within the organization

Activity 1A:

Identify the broad factors that affect policy

Question – What drives or shapes policy (positive and negative) in your agency

Activity 2A:

Identify adolescent-focused policy and advocacy efforts

Complete *Policy and Advocacy Roles Matrix*. Identify roles staff can play in general. Identify roles they routinely provide for adolescent health.

- Define what types of policy and advocacy roles staff can play generally routinely play
- Define issues, assess needs, provide data,
- Identify evidence-based practices for policy
- Research policies
- Prepare issue briefs or white papers
- Identify implications of policy
- Participate on health policy advisory groups
- Participate on groups that educate policy makers
- Propose legislative policy
- Develop programmatic policy
- Contribute to the assessment and/or revision of existing policies to meet changing needs of adolescents
- Testify or speak before the legislature
- Develop talking points for others who testify or speak before the legislature
- Write rules or regulations for health policy
- Track policy
- Provide information or data on health issues to groups that advocate for or educate policy makers
- Train others in advocacy or policy skills
- Communicate with the media on public health issues
- Partner with the media to raise awareness and understanding about health issues
- Respond reactively when health issues gain attention
- Proactively disseminate information on health issues that have future policy implications
- Use informal opportunities to educate others (e.g. other staff, agency management, decision-makers) about health issues
- Advocate within the agency about health issues to raise visibility or spur action
- Other



Element #1: Legislative Policy

GOAL:

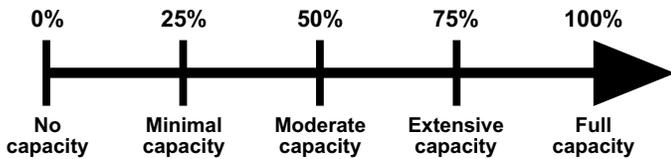
Assess the capacity for conducting adolescent health legislative policy within the agency

DISCUSSION (USING COMPLETED MATRIX):

- Where do legislative efforts primarily happen within agency?
- Adolescent Health Experts within the agency connected or involved?
- Agency recognized as a state-level resource for adolescent health issues?
- Clear standards for legislative policy development within agency?
- Are MCH staff familiar with these standards?
- AH efforts primarily reactive or proactive?
- AH legislative policy priority?
- Given policy constraints within the agency, how well are you doing in adolescent health legislative policy work?
- Partnerships with others who can do AH legislative policy work?

RATING:

- Using the data gathered and discussion, individual participants rate the organization's capacity for this element. Select ratings anywhere from 0-100% capacity.
- Develop consensus rating for this element.





Element #2: Programmatic Policy

GOAL:

Assess the capacity for conducting adolescent health programmatic policy within the agency

Activity 2A:

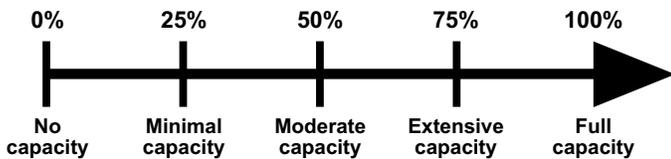
Brainstorm examples of programmatic policy that affects adolescent health efforts and issues

DISCUSSION:

- How does programmatic policy get made in agency?
- Do decision-makers understand adolescent health?
- Is it supportive of adolescent health?
- Challenges?
- Strengths?
- Opportunities?
- What would make it better?

RATING:

- Using the data gathered and discussion, individual participants rate the organization's capacity for this element. Select ratings anywhere from 0-100% capacity.
- Develop consensus rating for this element.





Element #3: Education/Advocacy for Action

GOAL:

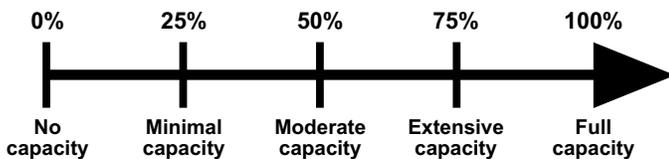
Assess the capacity for educating or advocating for adolescents and their health issues in order to create change or action

DISCUSSION (USING COMPLETED MATRIX):

- Given the constraints of your agency, do you take opportunities to educate/advocate with decision makers about adolescent health
- Where are you doing this well?
- Enough – are you doing what you can?
- Take advantage of opportunities to **directly** educate/advocate for action with decision-makers? **Indirectly** through others?
- Gaps?
- Adolescent health education/advocacy a priority?
- Does it have impact? What is the benefit?
- What else do you need? What would make this better, more effective?

RATING:

- Using the data gathered and discussion, individual participants rate the organization's capacity for this element. Select ratings anywhere from 0-100% capacity.
- Develop consensus rating for this element.





Overview of Capacity Area

CONDUCT OVERALL ANALYSIS:

- Strengths
- Challenges
- Opportunities

IDENTIFY TOP ISSUES:

- Brainstorm top issues – remind that these are the issues that need to be addressed
- Develop consensus on top 3-5 issues

Identify the overall “score” or rating for the capacity area (i.e. average the Element scores)



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Background

GOAL:

To identify the roles and constraints for policy and advocacy within the organization

Activity 1A:

Identify the broad factors that affect policy

DISCUSSION:

- What drives or shapes policy (positive and negative) in your agency

Activity 2A:

Identify adolescent-focused policy and advocacy efforts



Element #1: Legislative Policy

GOAL:

Assess the capacity for conducting adolescent health legislative policy within the agency

DISCUSSION (USING COMPLETED MATRIX):

- Where do legislative efforts primarily happen within agency?
- Adolescent Health Experts within the agency connected or involved?
- Agency recognized as a state-level resource for adolescent health issues?
- Clear standards for legislative policy development within agency?
- Are MCH staff familiar with these standards?
- AH efforts primarily reactive or proactive?
- AH legislative policy priority?
- Given policy constraints within the agency, how well are you doing in adolescent health legislative policy work?
- Partnerships with others who can do AH legislative policy work?

RATING:

- Develop consensus rating for Element 1



Element #2: Programmatic Policy

GOAL:

Assess the capacity for conducting adolescent health programmatic policy within the agency

Activity 2A:

Brainstorm examples of programmatic policy that affects adolescent health efforts and issues

DISCUSSION:

- How does programmatic policy get made in agency?
- Do decision-makers understand adolescent health?
- Is it supportive of adolescent health?
- Challenges?
- Strengths?
- Opportunities?
- What would make it better?

RATING:

- Develop consensus rating for Element 2



Element #3: Education/Advocacy for Action

GOAL:

Assess the capacity for educating or advocating for adolescents and their health issues in order to create change or action

DISCUSSION (USING COMPLETED MATRIX):

- Given the constraints of your agency, do you take opportunities to educate/advocate with decision makers about adolescent health
- Where are you doing this well?
- Enough – are you doing what you can?
- Take advantage of opportunities to **directly** educate/advocate for action with decision-makers? **Indirectly** through others?
- Gaps?
- Adolescent health education/advocacy a priority?
- Does it have impact? What is the benefit?
- What else do you need? What would make this better, more effective?

RATING:

- Develop consensus rating for Element 3



Overview of Capacity Area

CONDUCT OVERALL ANALYSIS:

- Strengths
- Challenges
- Opportunities

IDENTIFY TOP ISSUES:

- Brainstorm top issues and develop consensus on top 3-5 issues

Identify the overall “score” or rating for the capacity area (i.e. average the Element scores)



Policy and Advocacy Activities

	Activities Allowed by the Agency	Activities Routinely Conducted for Adolescent Health
Define issues, assess needs, provide data	_____	_____
Identify evidence-based practices for policy	_____	_____
Research policies	_____	_____
Prepare issue briefs or white papers	_____	_____
Identify implications of policy	_____	_____
Participate on health policy advisory groups	_____	_____
Participate on groups that educate policy makers	_____	_____
Propose legislative policy	_____	_____
Develop programmatic policy	_____	_____
Testify or speak before the legislature	_____	_____
Develop talking points for others who testify or speak before the legislature	_____	_____
Write rules or regulations for health policy	_____	_____
Track policy	_____	_____
Contribute to the assessment and/or revision of existing policies to meet changing needs of adolescents	_____	_____
Train others in advocacy or policy skills	_____	_____
Provide information or data on health issues to groups that advocate for or educate policy makers	_____	_____
Communicate with the media on public health issues	_____	_____
Partner with the media to raise awareness and understanding about health issues	_____	_____
Respond reactively when health issues gain attention	_____	_____
Proactively disseminate information on health issues that have future policy implications	_____	_____
Advocate within the agency about health issues to raise visibility or spur action	_____	_____
Use informal opportunities to educate others (e.g. other staff, agency management, decision-makers) about health issues	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____