Part 1: Problem Definition and Issue Framing

Describe the problem you are addressing and say why it’s important and who’s hurt.

1. That is: What is the nature of your problem? Why should policy makers care about it? What are the indicators of your problem, its consequences, severity, prevalence, incidence, differential effects (e.g. by race, region, state, age, income), trends, causes, contributing factors. Use the best estimates available. Draw upon your epi and stat courses to show trends and variations.

In the paper, also answer the following additional questions, imbedded in your narrative, not slavishly responding to each question:

1. How long has the problem been known about by experts? Has the problem been visited before under a different issue framing? How it is framed now?
2. What role has been played by experts and policy analysis groups, foundations and others in legitimizing the issue as a public problem? How have their estimates and definitions and their assessment of causes differed from those of initial advocates?
3. Has your issue become salient, when did that happen? Has saliency waxed and waned or been sustained – why? How is the way the public views the news relevant to health policymaking in general and your issue in particular?
4. What individuals or groups are acting as policy entrepreneur or advocates for bringing public attention to the problem? To what extent do those advocating these problems manifest the qualities of policy entrepreneurs? What tactics have they used and with what success have they garnered press and official attention? What other groups have they enlisted? Among the various ways that problems come to the public agenda, which ones were relevant to your issue and why? To what extent did your policy’s issue process seem to accord with prevailing models of agenda setting?
5. What resources does the President have to put an issue on the public agenda and move it along? What role did the President play in moving your issue to the public agenda? How do Presidents decide which items to put on their agenda? How were those relevant on this issue? What’s been the role of the White House? Have the President, White House staff, OMB been aggressive or passive, leading or following, brokering, bargaining, cajoling? What demands have they made for inclusions or exclusions from the legislative proposals being considered? Has a veto been threatened? If so, could it be overridden? Has the White House changed priority of your issue on its agenda?

**Page limit, 2 pg. matrix (single spaced) & 4 page (single spaced) paper. Example of Part 1 Matrix:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Policy Problem | 1st Major Source | 2nd Major Source | 3rd Major Source | Other sources |
| Prevalence, severity, indicators (variations by age, race, income, region, time) | Evidence from this source | Evidence from this source | Evidence from this source | Evidence from other sources, use footnotes to cite sources |
| Consequences (morbidity, mortality, costs, etc) | Evidence from this source | Evidence from this source | Evidence from this source | Evidence from other sources, use footnotes to cite sources |
| Causes, contributing factors | Evidence from this source | Evidence from this source | Evidence from this source | Evidence from other sources, use footnotes to cite sources |
| **Rationale for Government Intervention** | Arguments such as inequity, externalities, gov’t responsibility for health and safety and to protect vulnerable populations – see text | These “rationale” arguments may come from interest or advocacy group claims, or your own arguments and not necessarily from sources at top of columns. | Think in terms of market failure. Why can’t the private sector solve this problem. Why need government for it? |  |