Social Policy for Effective Practice
A Strengths Approach

Second Edition
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Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1
Social Work and Social Policy: A Strengths Perspective provides an overview of social policy and programs and introduces the basic concepts that are the foundation for the rest of the book. My goal in the first chapter is to help students understand why policy practice is critical to effective social work practice. I discuss the value base of the strengths perspective and explain how a strengths approach changes not only the policy product but also the policy analysis and development process. Students are challenged right away to find an issue about which they have passion and to begin to build policy practice skills. New to this chapter is the concept of dual assessments, whereby social workers are expected to also assess the specific policy issues that impact their clients and consider whether intervention requiring use of policy practice skills is necessary. By the end of the first chapter, I hope students will be excited about policy practice and interested in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to help influence social policies and programs.

Chapter 2
The Historical Context: Basic Concepts and Early Influences presents history as a policy practice tool, and provides an analytic framework to support that approach. This chapter examines the historical context for the development of social welfare policies and programs, discusses the genesis of social welfare in early societies, and traces the development of U.S. social policies through the early years of the 20th century. New to Chapter 2 is an expanded discussion of the origins of social work, discriminatory health and mental policies during this period, formation of the Democratic and Republican Party, the importance of policy research done by pioneer social workers, and the pivotal role of women in social policy development during the 1800s and 1900s.
Chapter 3

The Historical Context: Development of Our Current Welfare System then begins with World War I and continues through the administration of Barack Hussein Obama. These chapters are premised on the idea that history is not merely a prologue to the present. Rather, the ways in which historical social policy approaches are understood and reinterpreted directly and immediately affect the social policy decisions made. Chapter 3 contains an expanded discussion of the civil rights movement and of income support strategies enacted since World War II. The changes that brought us retrenchment and devolution during the Reagan era and the Obama presidency in 2008 are also examined.

Chapter 4

The Economic and Political Contexts helps students understand how economic fluctuations and political change interact with shifting social values to shape and reshape social policy. New to this chapter is a discussion of the enabling state, recommodification of labor, and an expanded discussion of regulatory policy. I have also added discussion of how community organizing skills can be used to shape the political context and to create opportunities for civic engagement.

Chapter 5

Tools for Determining Need and Analyzing Social Policy illustrates for students how to use a policy analysis framework to analyze social policy and gives them a chance to do hands-on analysis of new legislation passed under the Obama administration that addresses homelessness. Strength principles for policy analysis are explained and their application is discussed.

Chapter 6

Social Policy Development and Policy Practice examines the process of policy development in detail, and then focuses explicitly on the ways in which social workers can intervene in that process. Various ways that social workers engaged in policy practice can use the strengths principles are discussed. This chapter contains a new Sample Action Plan that lays out specifically how to develop and implement strategies to influence social policies.

Chapter 7

Civil Rights provides a detailed look at the groups who have experienced discrimination and oppression in the U.S. Expanded information on violence against women and discrimination based on ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender
identity as well as efforts to fight discriminatory policies, is provided in this edition. Increased emphasis is put on understanding how to analyze a seemingly neutral policy for negative impact on traditionally oppressed groups. Beginning in Chapter 7 and continuing through the remainder of the text, I analyze major policies in separate boxes using a simple policy analysis framework introduced in earlier chapters. This is done so that students can easily grasp the basic policy elements of goals, service delivery, financing and then can more readily understand later amendments. This chapter also contains new information on immigration policy and international human rights.

Chapter 8

Income- and Asset-Based Social Policies and Programs examines the major government policies and programs designed to reduce poverty. Its primary emphasis is on means-tested and insurance-based policies and programs that provide cash to clients. However, because SNAP, employment policy, and housing subsidies also directly help ameliorate the effects of poverty, I examine these policies and programs as well. I also analyze official definitions of poverty, contrast universal with selective programs, and examine in greater detail the major asset-based policies currently advocated by social workers. This edition places much more emphasis on new strategies to ameliorate poverty in the U.S. as well as internationally.

Chapter 9

Policies and Programs for Children and Families focuses on policies and programs dealing with child protection, family preservation, permanency planning, adoption, foster care, and juvenile justice. Programs for children with special needs as well as child-support enforcement policies are also examined. This edition contains an expanded discussion of how child welfare and family policy can be improved and includes content on family capacity building, as well as on international child welfare and family policy.

Chapter 10

Health and Mental Health Policies and Programs has been completely updated and greatly expanded to explain major health and mental health policies and how they will change as a result of 2010 health reform legislation. Implications of health care reform for social work are detailed. The impact on immigrant families is discussed, and further strategies necessary to reduce health disparities are examined. Students are given resources to stay up to the minute on policy and program changes resulting from implementation of health care reform legislation, and ways they can shape implementation are explained.
Chapter 11

Policies and Programs for Older Adults, provides an overview of key policy issues that influence older adults including the many changes resulting from the 2010 health care reform legislation. Changes discussed include creation of CLASS, a voluntary long-term care insurance program, the Elder Justice Act, and improvements to Medicare. Implications for social work are detailed. I also examine policy strategies to promote economic security, adequate health care, and social engagement, as well as ways to support intergenerational cooperation. This chapter includes expanded and updated discussions of mental health, home and community based services, rebalancing the long-term care system, changes in nursing home care, caregiving, health disparities among minority elders, grandparenting, and issues for gay and lesbian elders.

Chapter 12

The Future focuses on strategies for dealing with future policy dilemmas. The policy basics covered in earlier chapters provide the foundation for thinking about how we may begin to address future challenges. Guidelines for analyzing forecasts are presented. I then examine major trends that are expected to influence future social policy including globalization, convergence, growing pressures on the middle class, multi-generational families, and economic instability. The text closes with a challenge to students to help develop a vision of the future that will energize the journey, and to work to improve policies and, ultimately, future outcomes for our clients.