Developing DNP Policy Leaders in Addressing Health Disparities Through Education Assignments

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Introduction

- ❖ Goal of Healthy People 2020 is to achieve positive health outcomes across current areas of social, economic, and ethnic health care disparity (USDHHS, 2011).
- ❖ DNP graduates must be prepared to design, influence, and implement health care policies (AACN, 2006).
- ❖ Health care policy has direct implications on health care financing, practice regulation, access, safety, quality, and efficacy (IOM, 2001).

Purpose

To share the educational process and outcomes of DNP leadership development in policy through addressing health disparities

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Health Policy Course Content Overview

- Relationship of economics to policy development
- Health outcomes with vulnerable populations & policy
- Government and funding influences
- Economics of health care
- Policy development
- Financial management: project analysis, budgeting, revenue estimation, and financial risk.
- Ethical inquiry: health care access, utilization, and distribution of scarce resources.

Education Model Underlying Course: "Design Based Research Methods in Education"

- Educational model aims to uncover the relationships between educational theory, designed artifacts, and practice.
- Used for the study of learning phenomena in the real world situations.
- Formative evaluations are used to derive research findings for product development.

Brown (1992) & Collins (1992)

Methods

- After class completed, students in policy class completed a course evaluation survey questionnaire base on course content.
- Name identifiers removed from survey questionnaire and assigned code #.
- Students assigned 3 questions each as primary reviewer and 3 questions as secondary reviewer to facilitate interpretation inter-rater reliability.

Methods Continued:

- **Using Corbin & Strauss (2008) format for Constant Comparative Analysis**
  - All answers were read verbatim to familiarize coders with question responses.
  - Response statements were coded according to phrase or idea sequences as coding statements and initial themes developed.
  - Coders assigned to same questions, met to discuss their individual coding results and themes and collaborated to develop final coding statements and themes for assigned questions. Addressing inter-rater reliability issue.

Methods Continued:

- Coded statements and themes from questions were grouped into like topics and categories were developed that identified 3 categories reflected in the analysis.
- Topics that fit the categories were determined.
- Power point presentation developed for dissemination of project.
- Educational project submitted to GSU IRB under B1 exemption.

Assuring Data Quality: 4 Criteria Addressed

- Credibility – verify truth of the data and interpretations
  - Prolonged exposure, member checking, peer review

- Dependability – stability over time and replication
  - Stability over 6 months time elapse, replication by collaborative student experience, needs replication

- Confirmability – objectivity of data, examined by others
  - Data analysis examined by other data analysts, 2 persons evaluated each question initially and reviewed by analysis team
  - Limitations is that data analysis completed by subjects

- Transferability – findings transferrable to other settings
  - At this time, no knowledge of transferability
  - Needs verification with other policy course design and outcomes

Results

Results Categories

1. Educational process followed for DNP leadership policy development.
2. Policy related activities and challenges encountered while addressing health disparities.
3. Learning outcomes and development activities for creating policy change.

Educational Course Process for the DNP Student

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Step-wise process to develop DNP health policy leadership

1. Identifying a health disparity issue.
2. Researching the issue and participating in policy related activities.
3. Identifying policy concerns at the local, state, and national level including economic considerations.
4. Developing strategies to address concerns in the context of a DNP leadership role.
5. Evaluating contextual issues that influenced implementation of policy change.

Identifying A Health Care Disparity Issue and Population

1) Chronic Pain Syndromes in Pregnancy
2) Chronic Disease Prevalence in Rural Populations and Health Care Disparity
3) Decreased Incidence of HIV Testing in African American Populations
4) Chronic Disease in Aging Medicare Population
5) Uninsured Populations and Access to Care
6) Small Business and Worksite Wellness

Researching the Policy Issue

❖ Literature review with analysis of economics and health care delivery on population of disparity.
  ❖ Analyze the social, economic, political and social contexts of issue.
  ❖ Determine critical policies affecting selected health issue.
  ❖ Summarize current policy components in relation to health issue.
  ❖ Complete policy analysis, examine values and ethical issues.
  ❖ Begin to strategize options based on literature review.
❖ Interactions with policy expert.
❖ Collaboration with other healthcare professionals from a DNP perspective.
❖ Analytical approach to current information available from experts, legislators, and community members.

Policy-related Activities & Issues when Addressing Health Disparities in Selected Populations

Policy Related Activities with Participation at Local, State, and National Levels

1) Increasing awareness of disparities, access issues, lack of prevention & intervention services related to needs
2) Utilizing Telehealth in rural areas, evaluating cost/access
3) Initiating Wellness programs for workers & underserved
4) Faith-based HIV clinic to address minority and rural access
5) Participating in the legislative process at all levels of government to further policy changes and health care reform measures.

Developing Strategies as a DNP Leader

1) Serving as a resource in a time of provider shortage, in an era of reform.
2) Developing strategies and implementing programs utilizing EBP to ensure optimal patient outcomes.
3) Assessing barriers to care, and addressing/developing policies to address specific needs for populations of health care disparity. Work with policy experts.
4) Implementing programs to address chronic disease management, while also providing a renewed focus on prevention measures. Addressing needed policies.

Evaluating Contextual Issues that Influenced Implementation

❖ Identification of multi-system influences.
❖ How to address chronic disease from a wellness perspective to reduce cost, mortality, and improve quality of life.
❖ Increasing access to care is vital in a time of provider shortage, but complicated by the legislative process and other barriers to care.
❖ Lack of insurance coverage, changing government & health care reimbursements, inability to pay, uncertainty in funding for needed programs & PPACA.

Resources Utilized by DNP Students to Influence Policy

❖ Interact and engage policy makers to ensure meaningful policy change in multiple settings.

❖ Involvement in legislative process to effect change in health care reform.

❖ Promotion of policy change through use of education handouts, talking points outlines, and technology, encouraging health care literacy.

❖ Engaging organizational leaders to effect policy change through DNP leadership and perspective.

Ethical Considerations Related to Health Care Policy

Ensure Justice
❖ Protect from Medicare fraud.
❖ Protect from discrimination with voluntary lifestyle modification in worksite Wellness programs.
❖ Increase access for the uninsured through affordable insurance plans and sites for seeking care.
❖ Maintaining confidentiality and privacy while implementing a faith-based HIV clinic.

Ensure Beneficence
❖ Increasing access to quality health care by establishing effective provider-patient relationships through Telehealth technology.
❖ Reducing risk of harm to uninsured patients due to lack of care.
❖ Balancing risks and benefits of treatment for mother and fetus in chronic pain and pregnancy.

DNP Policy Project Development Outcomes

❖ Innovative program to treat chronic pain syndromes in pregnancy to ensure optimal outcomes for mother and child by prevention of neonatal abstinence syndrome.

❖ Addressing rural health care disparity by utilization of advanced technology of Telehealth, increasing rural access to quality health care through provider collaboration.

❖ Implementing faith-based HIV clinic in rural Georgia to increase HIV testing and in an underserved African American population.

DNP Policy Outcomes

❖ Implementing a company worksite Wellness program for businesses between 100 to 500 persons to address both prevention measures and chronic disease.

❖ Instituting a Medicare Wellness program to address chronic disease, decreasing morbidity and mortality while decreasing health care costs.

❖ Plan to address the needs of the uninsured population through increasing access to care, developing programs in neighborhoods, and increasing numbers of providers available.

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome: Researching the Policy Issue

❖ Exposure to health care financing and the economic impact on health systems influenced learning by:

1. Giving insight to financial components of industry, including planning and analysis, while considering the DNP impact on the health care system.
2. Viewing health care reform measures in context of population, policy, and patient outcomes.
3. Recognizing impact of populations of health care disparity.
4. Understanding benefits of prevention and profound effects on chronic disease states.

Learning Outcome: DNP Strategies to Address Policy Issues

❖ In order to specifically address our individual health concerns, the APN/DNP students each took active leadership roles in a variety of health care settings.

1. Increased focus on prevention measures.
2. Encouraged participation in policies to increase number of providers available.
3. Support of measures to prevent duplication of services, and decrease health care expenditures.
4. Identify, evaluate, and address factors for policy change related to specific population needs.
5. Planned implementation of specific strategies to aid populations of health care disparity.

Learning Outcome: The Power of Collaboration

❖ For each DNP student, when asked to summarize the greatest avenue to effect policy change, the power of collaboration was a recurrent theme.

❖ Interaction with policy expert proved vital.

❖ Further collaboration with health care professionals was essential to meaningful policy change and addressing the overwhelming needs of populations health care disparity.

❖ Confidence of knowledge of how to proceed in policy matters

Conclusions

• Stepwise process of learning about health policy resulted in in-depth approach by students to their selected health care issue to relate to policy.

• Used formative topic summaries and policy expert input to complete summative plan & broaden policy knowledge.

• Aspects of DNP Essentials for Health Policy addressed.

• Students verbalized confidence to function in multi-disciplinary policy arena.

Conclusions Continued

• Students integrated:
  – Background understanding of health policy and health disparity issues from many views
  – Engaged policy expert in shared learning
  – Broadened perspectives of the policy process, economics, population issues, and health care impact
  – Developed individual strategy plans to address health disparity population issue
• Students became population advocates in health policy.
• Worked with health issue professional stakeholders in agencies and communities.
• Assumed leadership role.

Implications for Education & Practice

❖ **Preparation for the DNP student to promote effective policy change from this analysis include the following:**

1) **Utilizing critical analysis, identify an area or population of health care disparity and synthesize contextual issue impact.**

2) **Research the area of defined interest utilizing current literature, policy analysis, interactions with policy makers, and collaboration with peers.**

3) **Formulate and implement effective policy change through collaborative efforts using EBP as a guideline to ensure optimal patient outcomes.**

4) **Review policy changes frequently, and be open to further change to best address changing needs of health disparities.**

Implications for Education & Practice

❖DNP Roles in Practice Realized
- ❖ Advocacy
- ❖ Policy Engagement
- ❖ Program Developer
- ❖ Change Agent
- ❖ Leader

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