Final Policy Research Paper

Introduction

The healthcare industry faces continuous changes that are influenced by various forces in the whole world. The health sector operates under set policies that shape its operations and reactions to different challenges and events regarding its activities. The global health organizations have outlined various policies that unite and control the activities of every institution in the health sector. One of the most recognized institutions that played an important part in the decision-making processes of the industry is the World Health Organization (WHO). Every health organization operates with regard to the WHO policies and provisions that mainly focus on the wellbeing of the humanity. The policies cover the effects of health institution on the practitioners, patients and their relatives, as well as the community. An analysis of the policy processes in this sector would help in understanding the directions that are taken by the practitioners in decision-making and implementation of the management process (Curtis & Craig, 2014). The analysis will help identify the different constraints that influence the decision-making and management processes in the sector.

Therefore, this research paper will analyze different policy processes and apply of them to a reality scenario in the area. The health care demands that any policy application to resolve existing challenges should be systematically done to ensure that it is highly successful. The need for successful policy application is crucial, especially in the current situation where different challenges are being experienced in the industry. Additionally, the conventional approaches and patterns to policy analysis will be discussed and applied to resolve the problem of the Australian suicidal cases today to explain their implementation in the industrial operations of the sector.

Background and Focus of the Study

In all of the health management departments, the approaches to management and problem-solving processes require good decision-making and an adequate policy discussion in order to ensure an efficient outcome. A thorough debate on the policies concerning the issues at hand gives a clue to the involved people as to the right decisions to be made. The health sector plans provide a platform to base the decision made concerning the operations and activities to be undertaken in different situations. The policies are focused on ensuring the welfare of both the people inside and outside the sector, directly or indirectly.

In the changing world today, wide ranges of challenges are faced in the health sector and demand for policy amendments, making, or implementation. The plans are made in a conservative way, in a manner to ensure that they are not biased and are applicable without adverse effects directly or indirectly to the people associated. This research is aimed at discussing the various policy approaches and analyzing the policy processes in the health sector. The paper will further apply the policies in a reality scenario to explain their implementation in real life situations. The real life situation challenge will discuss the appropriate response to the alarming suicidal cases in Australia. In the paper, four policy analysis processes will be applied in resolving the Australian suicidal cases challenge. The application of the policy analysis processes will help in understanding the effect of each process to the entities concern and identify the most useful approach to using for each process.

Health Sector Policy Environment

The word policy encompasses a broad range of approaches, laws, habits, guidelines, prescriptions, and regulations. The policies can be of either macro or micro scale, depending on

the implications that they have on the health sector. For the macro policies, they affect most of the areas in the health sector and the people influenced by them have a limited amount of control over them. Civil service or fiscal policies are parts of this group of macro policies. Most of the macro policies have a robust political attribute in that for they have technical merits attached to each. For example, the policies on decentralization, public health care, new financing mechanisms, and Health Sector Reforms that affect the operations of the health sector activities. The macro policies are primarily the outside factors that affect the way health sector services are provided either on the substantive aspect or the whole health sector. The micro policies, on the other hand, are those policies which exist internally in the institutions and the people influenced by them have a certain amount of control over them.

Health policies are clearly defined in the sector and are recognizable despite the absence of written documents. The procedure followed in delivering the services, the nature of interaction accepted in the industry, the decision-making processes, information shared and used in the operations and the use of the old or introduction of new methods of operations forms a norm of the sector. The norm has transformed to laws that govern the health sector over time. However, due to the rise in the challenges in the industry, the decisions made need a staunch ground that they are based on, and that has forced the policies to be documented. The health sector has recorded the laws, regulations and guidelines to be followed in different scenarios of the industry in every region of the world. The policies are clearly defined in order to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation. Thus, in resolving cases in the health sector, the policies act as the checklist for the evidence-based analysis. The world challenges are of different nature and evolve over time, forcing new changes to be incorporated in the policies to ensure a smooth service provision in the sector. In order to ensure fairness, the policies are universal and just, dealing with all of the

humanity despite their specific location. However, a slight difference may be noted in the micro policies that are influenced by the controllable internal factors.

During crises, all the factors should be focused on ensuring efficient policy-making processes. Despite the instability in management, inadequate information, the emotional imbalance among the people involved, or other uncontrollable factors the policies made should be rightfully in response with minimal or no adverse effect on the people involved. The policies are laws that guide to what extent an action can be taken. In crises, most of the factors conspire against the policies but the health sector policies demand control of the repercussion of any decision or action taken. Most of the crises are not unique for they may have been faced in other region, thus the WHO and other international organization advocates for reference of the solutions to help handle the case at hand. Therefore, every institution in the world is entitled to observe the WHO policies keenly. Hence, reviewing the international policies is one of the major steps to policy making decisions. Moreover, discussing the policies applicable to the situations at hand is another way to effective decision making. The discussion should be on the impact of the stated policies that may lead to reviewing or adoption of the most efficient policy. The review helps define the different approaches, patterns, and processes of decision-making and analysis.

Heath Policy Processes

Given the factors that affect or may affect the policy making and implementation processes in the health sector, it is essential to note that reviewing these policies is crucial. Reviewing the existing policies helps to identify some of the faulty patterns that may exist in some policies and adjust them for more effectiveness. Some of the faulty patterns may include;

- Old policies formulating from earlier scenarios. Some of the policies may not have been implemented in a while or may have been applied and are less productive. Therefore, dropping off the old less efficient policies will help the health sector to be more efficient. The policies and their results after implementation should be analyzed in the sector to ensure keen monitoring and evaluation. This supports the reason policies should be documented for future referencing.

- Official policies that were formulated for a particular crisis may be biased to suit the self-interests of the people in the positions of power. Therefore, a revision of the policies helps to identify the faults in the existing policies and gives a chance to amend them in an appropriate way.

- Some policies may have been formulated under pressure and were barely analyzed and evaluated. Such an inadequate analysis may have caused overlooking of some of the important aspects that have a great impact on the provision of the healthcare services, and that may call for concerns. Therefore, the policies may be reviewed to incorporate any sensitive issues or concerns that may have been left out.

- Some of the existing policies may have been formulated by the government or national law for self-rule purposes. This aspect makes the policies hard to implement and demands a debate to discuss the merits concerning them. In such cases, the technical content of the policies needs to be enhanced beyond that of the political need.

- The new changes in the world may need to be incorporated among the policies in the industry. The sector needs to advance with the evolving world in order to keep itself relevant and to increase the quality of the services. Therefore, the review of the policies offers a chance to take in the new reforms concerning the sector.

● In other cases, no policies are recognized. Therefore, a discreet way on how matters are handled does not exist, making it difficult to base access the progress of the sector.

Different patterns in the healthcare sector may affect the efficiency of the industry and call for reforms. Each reason should be analyzed, evaluated, and monitored in order to prevent failures of the implementation of the wrong policies in healthcare. When ensuring that a process is well conducted by a defined policy, analysis procedures have been provided to the health sector management.

Policy Analysis Processes

The WHO policy charter provides an opportunity for a policy analysis to ensure that they are actually implemented and are productive. Policy analysis helps to determine the needs and interests of the system in the sector, addresses the course of the most suitable action and proposes the best approach for the implementation and its effects. These factors are emphasized by:

● Developing a clear understanding of the issues

● Identifying objectives based on the issues

● Setting out criteria for decision-making

● Formulating and assessing options

● Selecting the best option

Therefore, the analysis is concerned with the policy analysis processes, the players involved, and situations in that policy analysis need adjustments.

The policy analysis processes include;

First process

Issue identification. This is the first stage of policy analysis that defines the problem that needs evaluation. The management council or the head of the health institution raises concern about the issues that need to be addressed. The definition of a problem may vary depending on the ways in which it is perceived. Therefore, the involved parties need to focus on the individual facets in order to arrive at the proper decision-making process. The facets or points of view should be significant to the health sector community. The issues may arise from mere symptoms and should, therefore, be analyzed, researched on to ensure that proper understanding of the subject is achieved. Otherwise, improper definition and understanding of the issue may lead to misuse of resources and misdirection of efforts in addressing a wrong problem.

Second process

Council's objective. Outlining clearly defined objectives will help the governing body develop and assess the decisions they make about the goals they have set correctly. The objectives should determine the desired achievement of the analysis process. Thereafter, the aims should be arranged in order of priority, and any dispute among them should be be resolved before going on with the other processes.

Third process

Evaluation Criteria. In this stage, the different principles that need to be observed should be outlined, and evaluation should be noted too. A good policy analysis process demands for the following constraints and principles;

- Transparency

- Ease of administration

- Equity and fairness

- Cost effectiveness

- Collective agreement requirements

- Statutory requirements and

- Specific cost limitations

Fourth process

Options Identification. In this process, the different solutions to the problem are stated with the observations of the set goals and principles. The management team reports all of the possible solution to the identified problem. These options should be based on achieving of the established objectives in the best way possible. Different facets and points of view on the problem will lead to different options that should be discussed, evaluated and well weighed to identify the best in the later processes.

In the policy analysis, processes of the whole health sector community should be represented in order to ensure that an excellent policy analysis is achieved. The council, staff, and other members of the community should be equally represented in order to minimize the chances of biases in the decisions made. An excellent policy analysis will ensure that they observe the humanity rights covered by the WHO charters and ensure that the outcome is reliable and viable for application in the healthcare practices.

Matching the Stated Processes to Reality

The application of the policy analysis processes in a reality situation in the line of practice will help in understanding the procedures and their effects better. In every crisis, decision-making process, research, and analysis strategies are involved. In the same case, the public health crises are solved through the same processes. The processes include choice doing between different alternatives or solutions available and extensive research. One of the health care sector's problems that need to be addressed through a policy analysis process is the problem of suicide in Australia. Suicide is quite frequent in the country but is actually preventable. The strategies and approach on how to address the issues can only be done through the policy analysis process to establish the most successful procedures to undertake. Therefore, this study will focus on implementing the learned procedures on policy analysis and seek further information to help in formulating the best policies to curb the existing challenge in the country.

Suicide has been a great public and social problem in the world. Recent study states that by 2020 suicide may contribute to over 2.4% of the total deaths in the world. The rise in the suicidal cases has caused concerns from the health sector to enhance better living and counseling to the world's population (Bertolote, 2009). In the world, suicide is one of the top three causes of death. The health sector has a responsibility to analyze the causes of death in the world and examine each in regard to the sector policies. The problem exists for people between the ages of 15 and 44 and according to some statistics the incident rates are progressively increasing over time (Patton et al., 2009). In Australia, the rate of suicide has been noted to be quite high and increasing over time. Therefore, with the identification of the issue, a discussion on this will explain the implementation of the different processes in analyzing the health policy processes.

According to the policy identification processes, the problem has been identified. Suicide cases are a health sector concern that demands health care services. The medical centers and industry at large are supposed to guide, counsel, and help people live better lives for the longest time possible. The alarming rates of suicide cases in Australia have resulted in the UN and WHO organizations to indulge in the analysis and plan to help people to avoid committing suicide. The UN and WHO have discovered the concern of the people involved in the decisions to be made since it affects them. However, the country's population should be fully represented in research on the existing problem of suicide. The youths are said to be the most affected group in the reported cases, but that should not mean that the research should focus only on the youths. Every group of the population should be studied in order to ensure that a broad parameter is adopted to help the organization in analysis of the results. The participation of all the groups in the study will help minimize the chances of biases in the outcome gained at the end of the study.

The health sector policies that cover life issues and suicide missions are several and should be reviewed to identify the cause of the fault that may be contributing to the suicide rate alleviation. The policies should be discussed with the reference to the results found in the study of the people who have either attempted or lost close people through suicide. The global health sector organizations, including National Coalition for Suicide Prevention, have joined the country to help address the issue. The health care provision agents will review and analyze their policies to match the most suitable response to help reduce or even end the suicide problem in Australia. Therefore, with the given tasks the identification process that is the first process to policy analysis process has been addressed.

On the identification of the problem, the concern organization from the health care sectors should define their steps towards solving the existing problem. The organizations should outline

their objectives and the core goals to their activities. Planning of the measures, procedures, and programs to be undertaken should be clearly defined in order to ensure a clear distribution of the roles and a clear direction. The principles to be observed should also be stated to guide the tasks of the different parties involved in the work. People are usually rational in their behavior and decision-making, and that will cause diversity in the angles of perception among them. Therefore, the principles will act as controlling factors for the people involved in the study and the entire policy analysis process.

Afterwards, a research on the population is carried out to ensure that enough information concerning the problem is gathered. The research will be done on all of the population groups in the country to ensure fairness and increase the accuracy of the data attained. The data derived from the study should include all of the possible information on the factors that attribute to suicide among the different groups of subjects studied. In order to ensure reliability, the information should be in accordance with a set standard and principles.

Thereafter, results derived from the research should be screened in order to figure out the key factors that need to be addressed to ensure that the problem is solved. Thereafter, the different people should suggest possible solutions to the problem facing Australia. The results should lead to the analysis of the health care policies both macro and micro policies that have an effect on the suicide cases in the country. The policies should be well analyzed to ensure that all the factors contributing to the problem are well addressed. The faults in the existing policies either at global or national level should be open for debate to ensure that the loose ends are mend. The policies amendments should be viewed openly and without forgetting to review on how viable they are to other regions facing similar problems. All the possible solutions outlined should then be analyzed to ensure that the best option has been identified.

The first four processes of the policy analysis process include the above activities as discussed. The processes are progressively for they follow in steps, one after the other. However, after the identification of the best alternative among the suggestions given, the selected option should be implemented. The changes desired in the sector should be met by the option implemented. However, to ensure that all the selected option is efficient, a follow-up evaluation should be done. The assessment will help measure the effectiveness of the implemented policy or changes and provide a chance for further changes or recommendation.

The Australian issue is not unique in its nature and similar issues have been addressed earlier in other countries. The old policies used to mitigate or reduce the effect of the challenge in those areas can be borrowed and be implemented in Australia. However, some adjustments may need to be done. The changes may be due to the current factors that may have cropped up and are contributing to the existence of suicidal thoughts among the people in Australia that may not have been there before. For example, a strategy against suicide that was used in the 1910s will not address the issue concerning the Internet. That may be a contributing factor today to influence suicide thoughts, but it never existed in the 1910s.

From the abovementioned scenario on the challenge of suicide, a research conducted with an aim to seek information has identified the causes of suicidal thoughts. Most of the people attributed such thoughts to inadequate stress management skills and lack of counseling programs. The health care providers came up with a decision to implement evidence-based strategies across the country in order to provide people with access to counseling. This approach offered a good chance of reducing suicide rates in the country. The national and international bodies also advocated for the revision of the syllabus in the schools and incorporation of stress management programs. Another amendment was made on the policies governing the operations of the

healthcare centers. In the existing doctrine governing such organizations, there was no provision for guidance and counseling programs. The programs campaigned for and were incorporated into the roles of the healthcare sector services. The programs were aimed at giving people a chance to share their problems with an appropriate professional in the healthcare industry who would help them through their problem. Other solutions implemented with the aim to reduce the cases of suicide in the country were:

- Reduction of access to means of suicide
- Responsible reporting by the media
- School-based peer support
- Gatekeeper training in schools and structured organizations such as the military
- Training of frontline staff every three years such as ambulance officers, youth workers, emergency department personnel
- Training of general practitioners in detecting and dealing with suicide risk
- High-quality treatment for those with mental illnesses, including online treatments
- Appropriate and continuing care once people leave emergency departments
- 24 hour, seven days a week access to emergency teams, experienced in child and adolescent suicide prevention
- Crisis-call lines and chat services for emergency callers
- Assertive outreach for those in and discharged from emergency departments, including those hard to engage with
- E-health services and web programs (WHO, 2014)

With the implementation of the abovementioned solutions, WHO, UN and other national or international organizations hope to reduce the rate of suicide in the country by half over a period of one year. A monitoring and evaluation process will be conducted in order to analyze the effectiveness of the applied strategies. Furthermore, suggestions or adjustments will be done where necessary in order to ensure an effective change in the healthcare sector. Campaign on adoption of similar strategies in the global health sectors and governments will help to save lives and improve the efficacy of the healthcare industry. A continuous study on the factors that contribute to the rise in the number of suicide cases in the world will help in improving the effectiveness of the change programs that are introduced in different regions.

The policy analysis processes are definite and easy to implement. However, only a few policies can go through the whole process due to faults. The reasons behind the existence of these faults are the different platforms and policies (Walt, 2008). Some are implemented due political interests; some are temporal projects and others are implemented out of self-interest. Therefore, the policy effects are not well-analyzed, and that may cause a policy to be declared void during the analysis stage.

The operations of the healthcare sector, like of any other sector, are guided by the policies provided by the governing bodies. These agencies or organizations may be the UN, WHO, World Bank, Red Cross Movement, Humanitarian Donors, European Commission's Humanitarian Office, and professional associations and others. The policies are created in the process of a research study or are adopted after a long-term operation patterns. The defined policies focus on protection of all people in the healthcare sector, ranging from staff, patients, community, up to the entire humanity at large (Paul, 2007). Therefore, the operations of the healthcare departments are a concern for the wellbeing of people. On the other hand, comfortable

working conditions and working environment are offered to the staff in order to support them in their work duties.

Conclusion

The four policy analysis processes implemented in the Australian issue have helped to explain the different effects of the policies used in the healthcare sector. Through these processes, a discussion on the different issues undertaken in the analysis process have enabled the researcher understand how policies are formed. Additionally, the factors that have an impact on the formation of policies, and the factors to consider have been outlined. This research paper has helped in discussing the various policy approaches and in analyzing policy processes of the healthcare sector. Further, the application of the policy analysis processes has assisted in understanding the effects of each process on the entities of concern and in identifying the most effective approaches for implementation of each of the processes. Proper policy making and implementation are a crucial requirement for the health care industry achievement of its goals and objectives. Therefore, the policies should be well researched on and substantially observed at all times.