# Roles of the Legislative Branch in Health Policy

The formulation of health policy in the modern world governments is a complex process that has social, legal and ethical concerns. However, the goal of this formulation has always been to ensure the protection of the health of the people and promotion of their well-being. Significant health policies in the country require the weighing in of several levels of stakeholders and participants (Buse, Mays, & Walt, 2005). Their roles have been defined by the law and they must therefore abide by the roles. One of these levels of stakeholders is the legislature. This paper examines the roles of the legislative branch of government in health policy. The paper explores these roles on the basis of how a suggestion or an idea becomes a policy through the legislature.

In the US government, the legislature is believed to be the best-suited arm of government to develop health policies. This is because the legislature is publicly accountable and impartial. The lack of the independence the judiciary has and the autonomy that the executive boasts of makes the legislature most accountable and most responsive in dealing with policies that affect the people such as the health policy (Buse et al., 2005). The legislature has the role of receiving views from the public and players in the health sector to develop a policy. The different levels of legislature hold meetings through the legislature sittings or committees to introduce a proposed legislation or policy (Bennett et al., 2012). Secondly, the legislature uses the experiences of its policy makers and the independent individual views to critically explore the policy and its merits. This may be done through house debates, committee sittings and resourcing of divergent views from a variety of experts and stakeholders in the specific area (Buse et al., 2005).

While provided with adequate resources and logistics, the legislature has the power to even initiate commissions to conduct research or even request studies from agencies such as the general accounting office on the issues of health policy. From research and expansive discourse, the legislature also has a role in making important decisions regarding the policies and their implementation. This is performed through a rigorous and interactive process that takes into serious account important points and perspectives recorded during the specific research and experts statements (Gilson, 2012). Such deep consultative and advanced discussions often lead to a refined policy that can then be presented for executive review. Lastly, the legislature in their budgeting and resource allocation roles have a role in ensuring that the implementation of the health policy is funded and well facilitated. For instance, the financing and jurisdiction of policy-based programs such as the Medicaid depend on the congress (Bennett et al., 2012).

The legislature is the arm of government that is extensively involved in health policy. The members in this arm represent different people with different perspectives and interests. Through the legislature, ideas and raw data are transformed into implementable policy that can be adopted by the government and its other arms (Buse et al., 2005). In addition, the legislature goes an extra mile to provide data on the policy and also to finance and support the policies. It is also through the legislature that the opinions of the public, experts and other opinion makers are incorporated into health policies.

## References

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