

School of Policy Studies

Queen's University

MPA 836

**Health and Public Policy in Canada**

**Through the COVID-19 lens**

Friday April 24 – Friday June 5, 2020

*Modified by SARS-CoV-2 to distance delivery and interaction*

**Professors** David M C Walker MD, FRCPC  
Duncan G Sinclair PhD

### Design

This is an elective course intended to enhance students' understanding of the policy framework underpinning the functions and interrelationships of the elements of Canada's healthcare's "system" and provide the opportunity to explore policy alternatives to the *status quo*. *It has been adapted to distance learning.*

The policy framework that exists in healthcare, and the challenge of needed transformation will be viewed, in the main, through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The course is offered in a non-traditional, highly interactive, learning environment where all views and expressions are respected.

Texts and references are suggested but, by real-time exploration, students will be guided to understand the complexities of healthcare, the variable determinants of a society's health, the policies, structures and institutions that support a system (with comparative international examples) and the metrics for success and accountabilities to patients, families, funders and government. Students are expected to participate, to identify, analyse and critique issues and policies verbally and in writing and to be involved in team-based policy development as they would, and many will be, in the work-place.

Students who prefer a more traditional text and assignment-based course structure may find this approach rather different.

### Goals

Students will be encouraged to:

- develop as critical thinkers,
- be able to identify health policy issues (at the provincial, federal or global level),
- search for, marshal, analyse and critically appraise evidence bearing on those issues and
- develop, concisely describe and defend, orally and in writing, realistic policy options for healthcare reform and implementation as if to an audience of the deputy and Minister of Health and Long- Term Care or equivalent.

### Conditions

Twelve 3 hour sessions, some with guests from the world of healthcare  
 Teamwork required  
 Student presentations required  
 Individual class participation expected  
 Final briefing paper required

### Student responsibilities in the course

#### 1 Mini-presentations

+/- 3 students each week (names drawn at random) - 3 minutes per student

Purpose:

To draw to the attention of the class a particularly interesting recent article bearing on health systems, health care, health policy; with subsequent class discussion

Sources recommended include:

- The King's Fund
- Longwoods
- The Commonwealth Fund
- HealthyDebate
- A national newspaper
- A QSPS health policy Blog  
<http://www.queensu.ca/connect/policyblog/>

#### 2. Team Policy Presentations

The class will be formed into teams.

The Policy Presentations to be developed are described in the weekly course calendar that follows below.

One team will present each day. Each team is required to:

- Describe the major system issue they consider to be amenable to resolution or mitigation by policy development or policy change.
- Present the proposed policy, or policy options, which addresses the issue at hand; derive evidence that supports the selected policy option; address the various ramifications and implications of the policy option (eg financial, political); outline implementation steps and how and over what time line success or failure might be measured.

The team will present for 30 minutes maximum following which there will be questions and discussion from the class, the deputy and Minister and any expert retained by the Minister.

*A pre-circulated written policy brief* shall be distributed electronically before the start of the class (preferably the prior evening).

The brief and policy presentation shall be constructed as if given by early/mid-career public servants to a new Minister of Health, elected recently. In civilian life he owns a car dealership and was mayor of a medium sized town. He is supported by a new Deputy Minister (DM) who has spent his entire previous public service in another Ministry. From time to time, the Deputy has arranged that a visiting expert will be available to provide advice on the topic.

3. [Final Policy brief - 1000 words plus required annotated bibliography - due June 12](#)

“Based on the evidence available what do you consider to be the two most and one least effective policy directions made by the Ontario Government to address the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Students will be informed as to which instructor they should submit their final brief.

Evaluation and Grading of Final Brief

Coherence: 50% - Do the arguments in the brief hold together to make a coherent, convincing whole?

Basic knowledge: 25% - Does the supporting knowledge give you confidence that the author has a good working understanding of how health/healthcare is structured and works in Canada?

Style/readability: 10% - Is the brief interesting, readable, and free of grammatical errors?

Originality/novelty/flair: 15% - Is there evidence in the brief of original thinking, new ideas, novel approaches, etc.?

#### 4. Participation

The class experience is intended to encourage individual and collective participation in an environment of respect and listening.

#### Final Grading will be based on:

Team work/presentation	45%
Final Policy brief	45%
Class Participation (quality > quantity; incl attendance)	10%

#### Readings to support your learning

The following sources are suggested:

##### COVID-19 related

The Public Health Agency of Canada  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html>

Worldometer  
<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

CDC  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Health Unit  
<https://www.kflaph.ca/en/index.aspx>

The Hammer and the Dance:  
<https://medium.com/@tomaspueyo/coronavirus-the-hammer-and-the-dance-be9337092b56>

Canada Health Act <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/C-6.pdf>

## General Health Policy Sources

Exploring the 70/30 Split: How Canada's Health System is Financed  
<https://secure.cihi.ca/estore/productFamily.htm?pf=PFC588&lang=en&media=0>

Chapter 5: Health, Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services. Public services for Ontarians: A path to sustainability and excellence. <https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/reformcommission/chapters/ch5.html>

Unleashing Innovation: Excellent Healthcare for Canada: Report on the Advisory Council on Health Care Innovation  
<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/publications/health-system-systeme-sante/report-healthcare-innovation-rapport-soins/alt/report-healthcare-innovation-rapport-soins-eng.pdf>

The Peoples' Healthcare Act, Ontario

"Ending Hallway Medicine" Ontario reports

CWF: <https://www.vox.com/2020/1/13/21055327/everybody-covered>

## Light reading

- *Better Now: Six Big Ideas to Improve Health Care for all Canadians* Danielle Martin, pub Penguin
- *Matters of Life and Death: Public Health Issues in Canada* Andre Picard, pub Douglas & McIntyre
- *Being Mortal* Atul Gawande, pub. Doubleday

## Professors

**David Walker MD** is Professor of Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine and Policy Studies and previous Chair of provincial government commissions and Boards addressing SARS, Care of the Elderly and Public Health. Currently Director of the Health Policy Council of the School of Policy Studies; former Executive Director of the School of Policy Studies; former Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences and Director of the Medical School at Queen's.

He is currently Special Advisor to the Principal on Planning and Preparation for COVID-19

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Usually at Room 335 Robert Sutherland Hall

**Duncan Sinclair PhD** is former Dean (both Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Arts and Science) and Vice-Principal at Queen's University, was Chair of the Ontario Health Services Restructuring Commission and founding Chair of Canada Health Infoway; he was inducted to the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame in 2015.

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## SCHEDULE

Friday 24 April and Saturday 25 April

8:30-11:30

Introductions

Logistics:

Teaching and Learning at a distance

Identification of teams and assignment of topics

Class discussion:

SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 - the elephant in everyone's room

Health policy issues confronting Canada and the world.

Health and healthcare overview - DGS

Discussion ->

*Federal/Provincial realities*

*Public/Private realities*

*Brief History of healthcare as a component of Canada's social safety net*

*Publicly-funded Insurance*

*Leverage of Federal Funding*

Canada's Health/Healthcare "System" - DMCW

Discussion ->

*Organizational/Governance models*

*Structure and operations*

*Component parts*

*The Providers*

*The Costs and the money*

*Performance*

*Policy Challenges*

### Monday 11 May

8:30-11:30 Health Economics – Joint class with Don Drummond’s class

“The Economics of Health Care; impact of a pandemic”

Guest (confirmed): Don Drummond, Stauffer-Dunning Fellow, QSPS. Former Chief Economist, TD Bank, Assoc. DM, Finance Canada

### Tuesday 12 May

8:30-11:30 Public Health – Joint Class with Don Drummond’s class

“Pandemic preparedness – what are the principles?”

“COVID-19 – how are we doing?”

Guest: Dr. Samantha Buttemer, Kingston Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Health Unit

### Wednesday 13 May

8:30-11:30 Home, Community and Restorative Care

Policy Presentations to the Minister:

*Team 1*

“Policies that increase the capacity to maintain people in their homes”

Guest (tbc): Cathy Szabo, President and CEO, Providence Care

“Challenges in Home and Community Care during a Pandemic”

### Thursday 14 May

8:30-11:30 Acute Care – Hospitals

Policy Presentations to the Minister:

*Team 2*

“What COVID-19 induced changes to hospitals will persist in policy?”

Guest: Mike McDonald, Chief Nursing Executive and EVP Patient Care and Community Partnerships, Kingston Health Sciences Centre

“Emptying the hallways – how we did it”

Friday 15 May

8:30-11:30 Primary Care

Policy Presentations to the Minister:

*Team 3*

“Policies to facilitate adaptation of COVID-19 induced changes to primary care”

Guest: Dr. Kim Morrison, Chief of Staff, Lennox and Addington County General Hospital

“Current challenges in Primary Care including Ontario Health Team development – did COVID-19 give us the model?.”

Monday 1 June

1-4 Information Matters

Presentations to the Minister:

*Team 4*

“A policy proposal: What data should be measured in healthcare?”

Guest (tbc): David O’Toole, President, Canadian Institute for Health Information. Board Chair, KHSC

“You can’t manage what you don’t measure”

Tuesday 2 June

1-4 Health Human Resource Workforce Planning

Presentations to the Minister:



*Team 5*

“Policies to drive optimal HHR distribution for the future”

Guest (tbc): Dr. Jeff Turnbull OC, Past Chief of Staff, The Ottawa Hospital; former President of the Canadian Medical Association

“The healthcare workforce – planning for the future”

### Wednesday 3 June

#### 1-4 Technology and AI

Presentations to the Minister:

*Team 6*

“AI and technology during COVID-19 – policy implications”

Guest: Dr. Akshay Rajaram, Department of Family Medicine, Queen’s University

“Post pandemic technology and healthcare”

### Thursday 4 June

#### 1-4 Addictions and Mental Health

Policy Presentations to the Minister:

*Team 7*

“Mental Health during a pandemic: policy considerations”

Guest (tbc): Mike Bell, CEO Kingston Community Health Centre

“A view from the street: future policy options”

### Friday 5 June

#### 1-4 Indigenous Health Policy

Guest: Dr. Sarah Funnell, Indigenous Health Lead, Department of Family Medicine, Queen’s University

Topic: “Critical policy challenges in indigenous health

By **June 12** 1000 word **Policy Brief** due, electronically submitted in Word

As of April 6, 2020