Health and Public Policy in Canada

Through a COVID-19 lens

January 13 - April 7, 2021

Wednesdays, 11am-1pm

Instructors
David M C Walker MD, FRCPC
Samantha Buttemer MD, CCFP
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 “system” and provide the opportunity to explore policy alternatives to the status quo.

The policy framework that exists in healthcare, and the challenge of needed transformation will be viewed in part through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of the pandemic as an incubator and accelerant of innovation and change.

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

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,
- 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.

**Structure**

Twelve 2-hour virtual real-time sessions + offline guidance with instructors

Teamwork required

Student presentations required

Individual class participation expected

Final briefing paper required

**Student responsibilities in the course**

1. **Occasional reading**

Sources recommended include:

- The King’s Fund
  - [https://www.kingsfund.org.uk](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk)
- Longwoods
  - [https://www.longwoods.com](https://www.longwoods.com)
- The Commonwealth Fund
  - [https://www.commonwealthfund.org](https://www.commonwealthfund.org)
- HealthyDebate
  - [https://healthydebate.ca](https://healthydebate.ca)
- Newspapers with national focus e.g.
  - The Globe and Mail [https://www.theglobeandmail.com](https://www.theglobeandmail.com)
  - The National Post [https://nationalpost.com](https://nationalpost.com)
  - The Toronto Star [https://www.thestar.com](https://www.thestar.com)
- QSPS Health Policy Blogs
  - [http://www.queensu.ca/connnect/policyblog/](http://www.queensu.ca/connnect/policyblog/)

2. **Team Policy Presentations**

The class will be formed into teams and each week one team will present a policy proposal. *Instructors will be available to teams to guide their policy proposal development.*

The Policy Presentations topic to be developed is described in the weekly course calendar that follows below.
One team will present each session. Each team is required to:

- Address the assigned policy challenge; reframing the challenge is permissible if the assigned topic is, in your opinion, improperly framed. Any modification must be justified.
- Present the proposed policy, or policy options, which addresses the issue at hand; derive evidence that supports the selected policy; address the various ramifications and implications of the policy option (e.g. financial, political); outline implementation steps and how and over what time line success or failure might be measured. Consideration of public vs private funding/delivery methods should be included.

The team will present as if to the deputy and Minister of Health (and any expert retained by the Minister) for 30 minutes maximum following which there will be questions and discussion from the class

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

3. **Final Policy review**

Each student will create a “Memorandum to Cabinet” based on the ten team policy presentations. Of the ten topics/problems considered, please advise the Minister which you consider a) the most difficult to solve and b) that which has the greatest potential to contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the health/healthcare “system” over the long term? Give reasons for a) and b) which may not refer to the same topic/problem.

Maximum 1500 words.

4. **Participation**

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

Final letter Grading will be based on:

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

**Readings to support your learning (under review)**

The following sources are suggested:

COVID-19 related
The Public Health Agency of Canada

Public Health Ontario
https://www.publichealthontario.ca/

Worldometer - Coronavirus
https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/

CDC

Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Health Unit

Pueyo T. The Hammer and the Dance.

https://ja.ma/3e5H66u

General Health Policy Sources

Our History: Duncan Sinclair recorded webinar (xxxxx)

Canada Health Act R.S.C., 1985, c. C-6

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

International Health Care System Profiles. The Commonwealth Fund.
https://www.commonwealthfund.org/international-health-policy-center/system-profiles


The People's Health Care Act, 2019, S.O. 2019, c. 5 - Bill 74
https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/s19005

Hallway Health Care: A System Under Strain: First Interim Report from the Premier’s Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine

Scott D, Klein E, Golshan T. Everybody Covered: What the US can learn from other countries’ health systems.
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 COVID-19
david.walker@queensu.ca Usually at Room 335 Robert Sutherland Hall

**Samantha Buttemer MD** is an adjunct faculty member, a qualified family physician completing a fellowship program in Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Queen’s based at the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Health Unit. Graduated with distinction from the MSc Public Health program of the London UK School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Member of the QSPS Health Policy Council.
sbuttemer@qmed.ca

Emeritus Professor

**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 and was inducted into the Order of Canada in 2019.
dandlssinclair@gmail.com
Included in the course, dates tbd, will be:

The Sinclair Lecture (Dr. Bonnie Henry, CMOH Province of BC)

COVID update one year on - Drs Walker, Buttemer, Evans (Head ID, KHSC) and Moore (Medical Officer of Health, KFL&A)

SCHEDULE

Wednesday January 13

Introductions

Identification of teams and topics

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

Health policy issues confronting Canada and the world.

Canada’s Health/Healthcare “System” - DMCW and SB

Pre-circulated power-point

Organizational/Governance models

Structure and operations

Component parts

The Providers

The Costs and the money

Performance

Policy Challenges

January 20

Health Economics –

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

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

January 27

Public Health

Team presentation:
“Case and Contact Management: policy principles”
Response - Dr. Samantha Buttemer
Further class discussion: Is a sentinel surveillance system in Canada’s interest?

February 3
Care of the elderly
Team Presentation:
“What went wrong in Long Term Care?”
Guest (conf): Cathy Szabo, President and CEO, Providence Care

February 10
Acute Care
Team Presentation:
“What COVID-19 induced policy adaptation to acute hospital care should persist in policy?”
Guest (tbc): Mike McDonald, Chief Nursing Executive and EVP Patient Care and Community Partnerships, Kingston Health Sciences Centre

February 24
Primary Care
Team Presentation:
“What policy change in primary care would you propose using COVID as a window?”

March 3
Information Matters
Team Presentation:
“A policy framework to address measurement of the indirect effects of COVID”

March 10
Technology and AI
Team Presentation: “AI and technology during and beyond COVID-19 – policy implications”
Guest (conf): Dr. Akshay Rajaram, Department of Family Medicine, Queen’s University

March 17
Populations at Risk
Team Presentation:
“What has COVID taught us that requires new policy?”
Guest: ? Dr. Naheed Dosani or Dr. Danyaal Raza

March 24
Addictions and Mental Health
Team Presentation:
“The Homeless, the Shelters, the Overdoses: policy considerations”
Guest (tbc): Mike Bell, CEO Kingston Community Health Centre

March 31
Indigenous Health Policy
Team Presentation:
“Policy priorities in Indigenous Health”
Guest (tbc): Dr. Sarah Funnell, Indigenous Health Lead, Department of Family Medicine, Queen’s University

April 7
The infrastructure of Procurement and Supply – an Achilles Heel
Team Presentation:
A policy steal: which Province should be emulated and why?
STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

In this class I will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone feels respected, valued and welcomed. It is my intent to produce materials and activities that are respectful of the diversity of students and the experiences each of you brings to this class. Students are encouraged to participate during class. Because the class will represent a diversity of people, beliefs, backgrounds and experiences, every member of our class (including me, of course) must show respect for all other members.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic Integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas” essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities).

Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen’s. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment or the failure of a course to the rescinding of a degree.

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with physical and learning disabilities must contact the instructor as soon as possible in order for accommodations/modifications for course expectations to be made.

Queen’s University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Queen’s Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services]
COPYRIGHT:

The link below provides a brief summary of the Copyright Act of Canada (the Act) as it relates to instruction at Queen’s University.

https://library.queensu.ca/help-services/copyright-fair-dealing/copyright-basics-instructors

As of October 29, 2020