


Introduction to
Public Health FOURTH EDITION
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Chapter 2

Why Is Public Health Controversial?

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Objectives


- List and describe the reasons why Public Health is controversial
- Identify market justice and social justice

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Justice vs. Justice

- People have _____
- Leave people alone to be masters of their destinies
- Burdens and benefits should be spread justly and fairly
- Everyone should have: _____ & _____ of income
- Governmental control to ensure collective action

Ex: Smoking is a voluntary behavior and people must deal with consequences



Ex: Fluoridation of county water systems



Every adult individual is responsible for his or her life. Minimal obligation to the common good.

According to social justice: everyone has the fundamental right to **minimal** levels of income, basic housing, and education.

Market Justice vs. Social Justice

Individual responsibility



Basic rights

Where does America stand in this balance?

Are we focusing on the common good or individual responsibility?

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"Social Justice in the OECD – How Do Countries Compare?"

Bottoms of the Heap

Selected measures from the report "Social Justice in the OECD – How Do the Member States Compare?" include seven categories of life challenge and welfare risks.

Figures are weighted and on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

	Overall social justice rating	Overall poverty prevention rating	Overall poverty rate	Child poverty rate	Senior citizen poverty rate	Income inequality (Gini index)	Pre-primary education enrolment	Health rating (life expectancy)
Iceland	8.71	8.87	8.9	8.7	8.7	0.26	9.9	7.18
Norway	8.61	8.87	8.8	8.6	8.6	0.26	9.8	8.53
Denmark	8.56	8.86	8.8	8.7	8.5	0.24	9.8	8.48
Sweden	8.48	8.4	8.5	8.5	8.5	0.26	9.8	8.82
Ireland	8.09	8.03	8.0	8.0	8.0	0.34	9.4	8.31
Netherlands	7.71	8.06	8.0	8.0	8.0	0.24	9.7	8.82
Switzerland	7.48	7.39	8.3	8.4	8.4	0.20	9.7	8.82
Luxembourg	7.27	8.35	8.3	8.3	8.3	0.43	8.8	7.21
Canada	7.26	7.91	8.0	8.0	8.0	0.24	9.7	8.48
Hongary	7.20	6.86	7.2	7.2	7.2	0.29	8.8	7.17
Czech Republic	7.17	7.30	8.3	8.0	8.0	0.26	9.4	8.48
New Zealand	7.14	6.87	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.26	9.4	8.81
Austria	7.13	6.49	7.3	7.2	7.2	0.24	9.4	7.31
Germany	7.03	6.19	8.0	8.3	8.3	0.26	9.4	8.81
Slovenia	6.97	6.96	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.26	9.4	8.81
Belgium	6.73	7.06	8.0	8.0	8.0	0.33	9.4	8.58
Hungary	6.44	6.38	8.0	7.5	8.7	0.27	8.8	6.00
Poland	6.41	7.01	8.0	8.0	8.0	0.26	9.4	7.28
Taiwan	6.39	6.76	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.26	9.4	7.51
Finland	6.17	7.14	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.26	9.4	8.48
Australia	6.11	6.24	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.26	9.4	7.51
Japan	6.04	6.1	8.0	8.0	8.0	0.26	9.4	7.51
Portugal	5.87	5.77	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.26	9.4	7.51
Slovenia	5.86	6.19	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.26	9.4	7.51
South Korea	5.84	6.46	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.26	9.4	7.51
United States	5.79	6.00	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.26	9.4	7.51
Chile	5.29	5.29	18.4	24.0	22.9	0.48	6.58	5.42
Mexico	4.73	5.11	17.0	20.8	20.0	0.73	6.09	5.59
Turkey	6.13	6.20	17.0	20.5	20.5	0.60	6.13	6.20

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This corresponds to picture on right: Columns/How Measured: Score, Poverty Prevention, Poverty Rate, Child Poverty Rate, Senior Citizen Poverty Rate, Income Inequality, Pre-primary education, Health Rating

The United States ranked in the bottom five in Overall OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development) Countries

What do you think?

- Do you agree that the philosophy of social justice is preferable to the philosophy of market justice?
- Which is likely to lead to greater improvements in public health?

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Sources of Controversy

- Economic impact
- Individual liberty
- Moral and religious concerns
- Politics vs. science

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Economic Impact



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Economic Impact

- Businesses often resist public health measures because they affect profits
- Those who must pay may not be the ones who benefit
- Costs may be short-term, while benefits may be long-term
- _____ easier to calculate than _____



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Industries usually resist change because of the impact of upfront cost associated.

Cost of a vaccine is short-term but long-term benefit. Harder to calculate these benefits, but possible.

Individual Liberty

In the U.S., people have the freedom to drive wherever they want. But...

Do they have freedom to enjoy a cocktail while they drive? Why not?

Can people under 15 years old get behind the wheel? Why not?

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Individual Liberty

When Can Government Restrict Individual Freedom?

- _____ – Only to prevent harm to others
- _____ – To protect minors
- Common Good – controversial



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Individual behavior affects public health

Libertarian: ex: Drinking is allowed but no drinking and driving; tobacco use is allowed but not in restaurants

Paternalism: ex: Setting the drinking age to 21; can't buy tobacco until 18;

Common good ex: requiring seat belt use, requiring helmet use on motorcycles, prohibiting the use of many drugs

_____ vs.
_____ in the population
as a whole

Moral and Religious Opposition

Hot topics:

- Sex and reproduction
- Alcohol and drugs
- Assisted suicide and other end-of-life decisions (i.e., living will)



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Behaviors that deal with moral & religious issues affect public health

Sex and reproduction

- Problems -
- PH solutions -

Drug use

- Problems – hepatitis C causes liver diseases and cancer, HIV/AIDS (including pediatric), heart disease (cocaine, amphetamines, steroids), MV accidents
- PH solutions – may include needle exchange, safer IV drug use education

Everyone should have a **living will** (states your desires for or rejection of specific medical care) and **designate a power of attorney** (person responsible for health decisions for you)

Does government have right to say how and when a person should die?



Politics vs. Science



Science

- Scientific evidence may lack political backing
- Goals of politics and scientific findings do not always coincide

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Can occur when scientific advisory committees are stacked with advocates (industry or a particular cause) rather than scientists

- Ex: developers on environmental committees, industry representatives on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention committee

When has the line been crossed?

- How far do you believe government & communities should go to address public health problems?



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Read in Book

- Use textbook to review notes
- 20% of quiz questions will come from textbook material NOT covered in the notes



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Here's a little sneak peak of the Tragedy of the Commons

- Individuals may profit as a group by limiting each person's freedoms
- Exemplified in many environmental laws
- Read more in your textbook!