Hello and welcome to “Policy Modification.” The content for this lecture is taken, among other cited sources, from Health Policymaking in the United States, by Beaufort B. Longest, chapter 7.

The objectives of this lecture are:

- Identify policy modification influences
- Distinguish policy modification from policy initiation
- Understand the phases in which modification can occur
- Explain roles of branches of government in policy modification

In previous lectures, the Policy Formulation phase and the Policy Implementation phase were presented. In this part of the series, we will review Policy Modification, the final phase in what is really a cycle that continues on to additional Policy Formulation or Policy Implementation.

As you can see from the left-hand side of the chart, the Policy Formulation phase includes Agenda Setting and Legislative Development. Following the formal enactment of legislation into law, the Policy Implementation phase begins, including rulemaking and operation. Now, we move on to the final phase, Policy Modification. Note that the Policy Modification phase connects to the Policy Formulation (Agenda Setting and Legislative Development) and Policy Implementation (Rulemaking and Operation) phases in Longest’s cyclical policymaking model.

To understand Policy Modification, let’s contrast Policy Modification from Policy Initiation. While they are related concepts, policy initiation occurs with the creation of an original piece of legislation and subsequent policy implementation. Modification stems from consequences of existing policy that stimulates changes. As I pointed out in the Longest policymaking cycle, the changes can occur in any of the stages described in previous lectures. It should be noted that the majority of health policy can be considered Policy Modification.

In the Policy Formulation phase, modification results in amendments or new but related legislation. In Agenda Setting, affected parties can catalogue the problems that the existing policy causes and introduce a new possible solution. In the Legislative Development stage, changes in the environment can lead to creation of legislation by policy makers.

In the Policy Implementation phase, changes to regulations are common and ongoing. Remember, regulations carry the force of law, so these modifications can impact organizations greatly. In Policy Operation, modification can occur from two sources. First, regulators seek to manage the policy to accomplish goals, so changes occur when the operation does not cause the desired effect. Second, pressure from interest groups and/or lobbyists may seek to influence regulatory operations. As Longest writes in his text, “Elected policymakers come and go, but the bureaucracy remains” (pg. 155).

What factors lead to policy modifications? The reasons are varied, but include unintended consequences, that is the policies cause problems that were not foreseen. Of course, lobbyists working for affected stakeholders can exert pressure to modify existing policy. Also, regulators can modify policy following an assessment. Perhaps the results of the operation did not meet the
stated objectives. In addition, budgetary, social, biological, technological, demographic, or legislative changes in the environment can lead to modification.

7. All branches of government can stimulate Policy Modification. Starting with the Legislative branch, lawmakers hold formal committee hearings to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular implemented law, and, if warranted, develop modified legislation. More powerfully, the practice of budgetary oversight, and subsequent changes in funding can modify policy significantly.

The Executive branch, including the President or Governor and the executive secretaries, exert significant control over the implementation phase of policymaking. This affords them an abundance of opportunity to instigate policy modification. Also, at the federal level the Office of Management and Budget, the assists the President in the development and execution of his policies and programs. The Florida Center for Health Information and Policy Analysis provides a similar service to the Governor of Florida.

Finally, the Judicial branch can modify policy in the development and implementation stages. For example, the courts could strike down laws enacted by the legislature. Or judges could enforce the implementation of policy by declaring delays illegal.

8. This concludes the lecture on “Policy Formulation Modification.” The following questions are some that you will be expected to know:

1. What distinguishes policy modification from policy initiation?
2. At which phase(s) or stage(s) can policy be modified?
3. What are some of the reasons policies are modified?
4. In what ways can a legislature modify policy? Executive branch? Judicial branch?

This concludes the series on Policy Formulation and Implementation. Thank you for watching and listening.