

**Healthcare Laws and Policies**

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Course No

Date

## **Healthcare Laws and Policies**

Healthcare laws and policies are not just general guidelines; they are policies and procedures that guide the activities of healthcare [providers]. Laws and policies promote consistency, reduce mistakes, and keep healthcare workers and patients safe. Policies and procedures provide standardized daily operations; they clarify critical health and safety issues, legal issues, and regulatory requirements. Healthcare laws and policies must be practiced. However, every organization has a different way of practicing. Healthcare facilities customize systems that help their workers to manage policies. Customization improves productivity and efficiency.

Laws and policies are important in healthcare because they guide decision-making and govern outcomes. The purpose of the policies is to clearly communicate to employees what the healthcare organization expects from them (Wilensky & Teitelbaum, 2019). They help healthcare workers to understand their responsibilities in the organization. Laws and policies set the foundation for the provision of services safely and effectively. Due to a rapid increase in regulations and requirements, for example, the Affordable Care Act, setting laws and communicating them to healthcare workers has become quite a challenge.

Healthcare policies and laws have had an impact on health systems and stakeholders. Most policies target low-income populations, and this has reduced healthcare inequalities. The Affordable Care Act, for example, has increased the number of the insured population. Individuals who would have not previously afforded healthcare services can now access the services (Thompson, 2014). Patient care policies ensure that healthcare facilities provide different services for different patients. Patients have different needs, and healthcare systems must accommodate the different needs. Patient care policies address the procedures a facility performs and referral terms. Safety policies and laws lookout for the health and safety of

healthcare providers; they ensure that healthcare workers are provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) and that employee wellness is promoted.

Healthcare policies and laws have increased the demand for nurses. With more people accessing healthcare, the need for nurses has grown. While this is a positive impact on job-seeking nurses, it has some negative consequences. The nurse-to-patient ratio is strained, and nurses have to work longer hours. This has led to burnout and low-quality healthcare. The public has to pay higher insurance premiums. As a result of healthcare law and policies, insurance companies have to provide a wider range of insurance and cover pre-existing conditions, attracting higher premiums. Taxes have gone up. Health law and policies require that healthcare inequality be reduced. In a bid to meet this demand, the wealthy people are being taxed more. Businesses are cutting employee hours to avoid covering for their insurance. Companies have to cover the insurance of full-time employees and those working for over fifty hours.

It is essential to be aware of the impacts of healthcare law and policies because that will help the people who run healthcare systems and stakeholders to make sound decisions. For example, now that more people have access to healthcare services, the need for healthcare providers is higher. The concerned parties should come up with a way of hiring more staff and enrolling more students in healthcare education courses. The government should come up with policies to ensure that employers are not cutting short hours to avoid paying for employees' health insurance. Being aware of the impacts will ensure that all the parties involved play their part effectively for the betterment of healthcare.

Value conflict refers to something that a stakeholder may have become a part of that is against their convictions and beliefs; it is when personal beliefs are in conflict with organizational beliefs. Two major causes of value conflict between stakeholders in the healthcare system are limited resources and honesty (Swansburg, 1991). Health care laws and policies require that healthcare providers are honest at all times. Sometimes family members may want to withhold medical information from their patients to protect them emotionally. However, patients have the right to the information. Deciding how to share the information with a patient may cause the healthcare provider some value conflict because it goes against the family's beliefs. Limited resources can cause value conflict. Healthcare providers are required to give patients help to the best of their abilities. However, some patients cannot afford to access some healthcare resources due to financial constraints. This puts healthcare workers in tough positions because while they want to provide the best care to the patient, yet they cannot use the resources before they are paid for.

Value conflict can affect stakeholders' decision-making. In a bid to provide the best care to patients, stakeholders might find themselves stepping out of healthcare laws and policies. Most stakeholders undergo a lot of training, and yet dealing with value conflicts can be a challenge. Over time, through experience, stakeholders learn how to deal with value conflicts. Although stakeholders are empathetic, they must establish professional boundaries and observe healthcare laws and policies. Surrounding themselves with other experience stakeholders can help because they can get advice from them.

## References

Swansburg, R. (1991). *Management and Leadership for Nurse Managers*. Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

Thompson, T. (2014). *The Affordable Care Act*. Greenhaven Publishing LLC.

Wilensky, S., & Teitelbaum, J. (2019). *Essentials of Health Policy and Law*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.