policy

NEW ADVOCACY TOOL TACKLES POLICY BARRIERS TO SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS

July 2012

Key Topics

- Effective advocacy committee design
- Analysis of political, social, and economic contexts
- Stakeholder mapping
- Understanding of the policymaking process
- Issue framing
- Prioritization of advocacy efforts
- Effective use of international law/human rights agreements
- Target audience identification
- Crafting of successful advocacy messages

A range of policy barriers restrict the availability of key hepatitis, HIV, drug treatment, and harm reduction services for people who inject drugs. These services are vital to halting the spread of HIV, especially in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where unsterile sharing of injection drug equipment is the major driver of the HIV epidemic. Yet, the complex and dynamic policy environment surrounding services for drug users poses a challenge to analysts, advocates, and decisionmakers alike. The *Policy Analysis and Advocacy Decision Model for Services for People Who Inject Drugs* is a collection of tools that can be used to make sense of this complexity, allowing users to assess and address policy barriers that restrict access to services for drug users.

Policy Barriers

Whether or not countries formally prohibit or restrict access to harm reduction services, repressive policies create legal vulnerability for drug users and make them susceptible to abuse and harassment by law enforcement, which often prevents them from accessing services. These policies also reduce access to services, particularly needle and syringe programs and opioid substitution therapy, by placing participating clients, staff, and healthcare providers at risk of harassment, penalization, and prosecution.

How the Decision Model Can Help

A coordinated, strategic, evidence-based advocacy strategy is vital to achieving policy change. The decision model can help advocates craft such a strategy. The model can identify areas of weakness in the policy environment surrounding access to services for drug users. It also has the potential to strengthen global advocacy efforts by offering advocates a common tool to measure progress that allows for comparison between countries and over time.

List of Tools

- **Policy Inventory and Analysis.** Instruments and procedures guide users in compiling a reference library of key policy documents. The analytic framework can then be applied to assess the extent to which policies enable or restrict implementation of key services in comparison with international best practices.

PEPFAR

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HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

- **Policy Implementation Assessment Interviews.** Survey instruments guide users in collecting the opinions and experiences of key informants, services providers, and clients regarding the perception and implementation of policies, which will help them understand whether to focus on changing policy language or on policy dissemination/implementation.

- **Policy Advocacy Planning Worksheets.** These worksheets help users identify and prioritize policy issues, engage stakeholders, and conduct advocacy campaigns.

Acknowledgments