

Pharm 543 Laws & Ethics: **Problem Definition**

Submit via *CollectIt* following these instructions

First line: Pharm 543 **Problem Definition**

Second line: Group <number> <project title>

Third and subsequent lines: Group Members: <name of each group member>

<submitted material; double spaced; 1 inch margins, 10 to 12 point type, appropriate citations in footnotes (not end notes, please); Word (.doc) files unless prior arrangements have been made>

Please name the file as follows: 8543 <group number> Problem Definition

Please provide 1-2 sentences for each of the following:

1. **Describe the problem**

This description of the empirical situation should be as precise and complete (but brief) as you can make it. The values underlying your description of the problem should be described - what is your perspective, a pharmacist, a pharmacy owner, pharmacist employee, patient, payer, etc. If you have documentation supporting your problem, please include the references as a footnote.

2. **Delineate the boundaries of the problem**

How long has the problem existed? What are its historical antecedents? Is your problem linked to some other, larger problem? Is the problem a local one, statewide, national, etc.? What changed to produce the problem?

3. **Develop a fact base**

Describe the sort of evidence that will be necessary to persuade others (e.g., a legislator) of the existence and severity of your problem. Identify suitable resources for your evidence.

4. **Describe your goals and objectives for resolving the problem, and how you might measure change.**

For instance, if the problem is medication errors, the goal would probably be to reduce medication errors, the objective is to reduce medication errors reported to Board of Pharmacy by 20 % in two years, and the measurement is a count of the reports of a specified type (e.g., medication errors where the patient actually took/was administered an incorrect drug/dose/strength). Note that this example is fraught with methodological problems – not that many problems are reported to the Board, so it would take a good long time to find a significant difference. Think through both the metric you plan to use, the availability of data, etc.

5. **Identify the policy envelope**

What *variables* can be measured regarding the problem? For instance, is staffing an issue with medication errors? Who are the stakeholders (persons or organizations with an interest in or are at risk because of the problem)?

6. **What are the potential costs and benefits to resolving the problem?** (Optional)

Note: identifying costs and benefits is an important part of policy analysis, but is beyond the scope of this course. If you have some ideas, please express them, but this is not required.