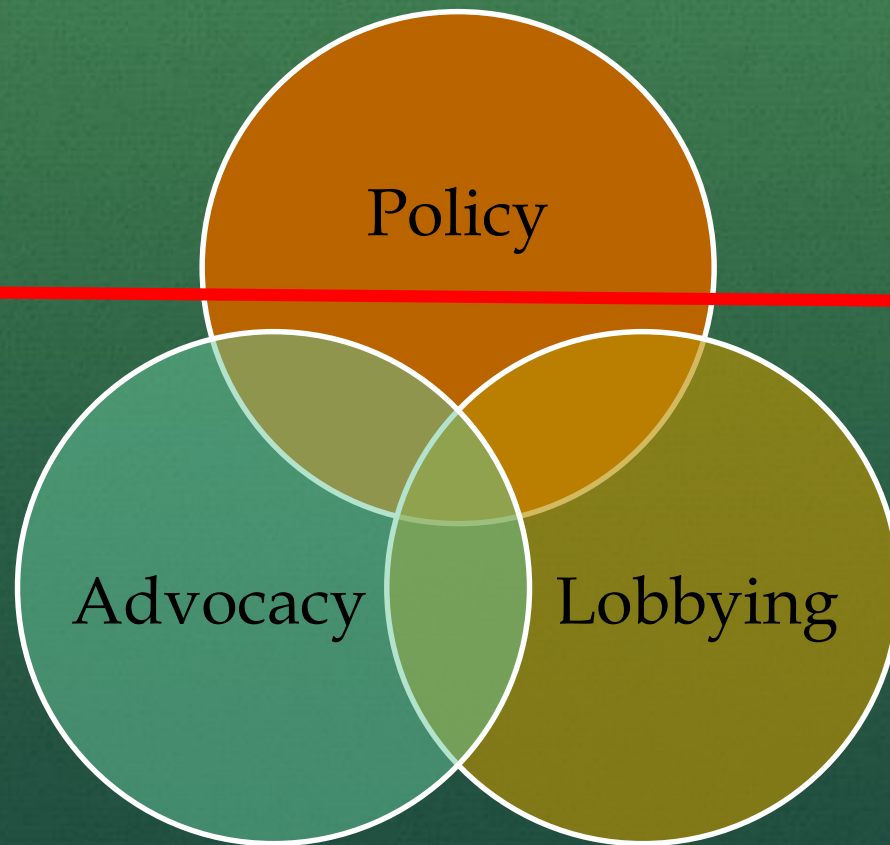# Translating data into policy: Ensuring your research generates impact

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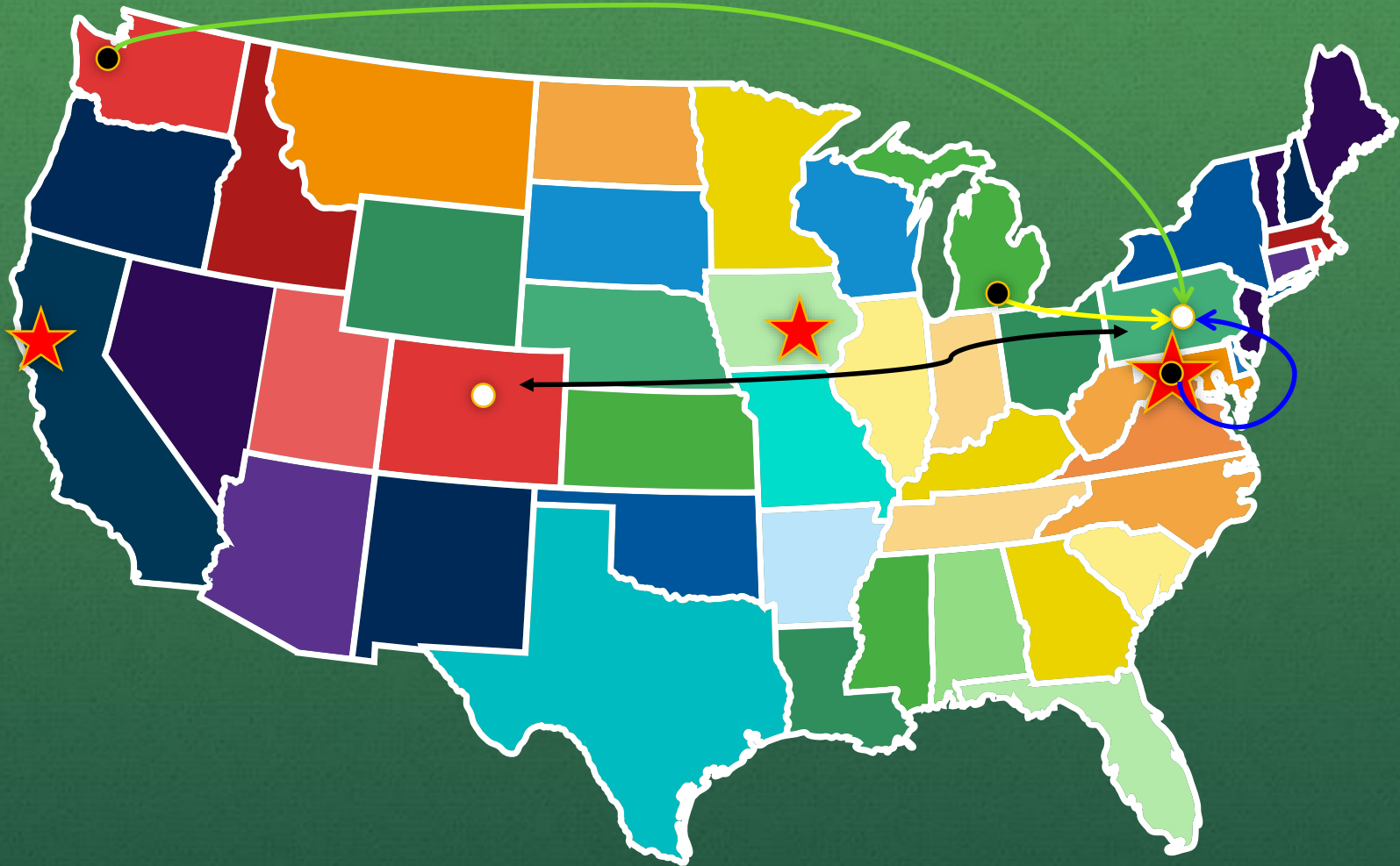
Broad definition of policy =
Moving people and systems in a direction you want them to go

The policy big picture

Dimensions of policy

- Different:
  - Levels of influence
    - Local, state, federal
    - Little "p" versus big "P" policy
  - Environments
    - Academics, government think tanks, associations, foundations, advocacy organizations
  - Approaches
    - Conducting research and translation; engaging communities and stakeholders; informing legislation and regulation; setting budgets; designing and implementing programs
  - Issues
    - Appreciate when an issue is "hot" – timing is <u>essential</u>
    - Goal = time your findings to inform an issue at a critical time

Policy skill sets

Term	Definition
Policy analysis	The process of identifying, comparing, and prioritizing potential solutions to a defined problem
Policy mapping	Conducting a landscape analysis of the policy issue(s), pain points, stakeholders, and targets / decision-makers
Evidence-based policy	The production and/or translation of high-quality data and research to inform the design of policies, programs, and products
Policy operationalization	Brokering complex policy, political, and programmatic negotiations to move people and systems from ideas to action
Communicating to policy audiences	The packaging of data and research findings in a clear, accessible way for policy makers through a wide array of policy products

Policy mapping

- Understand the policy landscape
  - Enriches your knowledge of the issue and what needs to be fixed or enhanced
  - Helps target focused, impactful research
  - Invites stakeholders to be invested in (and anticipate!) your work
  - When is the right timing for this?
    - When developing your research proposal.

Evidence-based policy

- Inform evidence-based policy
  - What is the line of sight between your research and the policy you want to change or the policy question you want to inform?
  - How do your research questions need to adapt, anticipating that line of sight?
  - Are there experts in policy operationalization you can invite to join your team?
  - How often do you plan to refresh your policy map throughout the course of your study?

Communicating to policy audiences

- Learn how to communicate to policy audiences
  - "Anec"data → blend stories and data
  - Be clear, simple, straightforward
  - Get comfortable with the best available – not ever – data
  - Consider which policy product would work best:
    - Infographic
    - Policy brief
    - Report
  - Present elegant policy solutions

A closer look: Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

Act 191 of 2014 provided for the creation of a tool that contains dispensation data of controlled substances, schedules II – V

Ultimate goal = help clinicians make evidence-informed prescribing decisions and to aid regulatory and law enforcement agencies in combatting fraud, abuse, and diversion

In first year, focused team on building reliable database before expanding other programs

- As the 49th state to launch a PDMP, no need to reinvent the wheel!
  - Reviewed peer-reviewed literature on benefits of PDMP use to facilitate clinician adoption
  - Conducted key informant interviews with PDMP administrators from other states working with our vendor on successes and challenges
  - Consulted with Brandeis TTAC for various analyses, including maps, legislation trackers, and best practice checklists

- Engaged peer agencies, community-based organizations, and physicians and pharmacists in informal rapid learning cycles to identify, design, and experiment with PDMP enhancements

- Mentored my team in the practice of evidence-based policy

Launched in August 2016

Policy change and sustainability of interventions

- Examples
  - PA PDMP
    - Intervention goal – make it as seamless as possible for providers to use the PDMP tool
    - Policy change – secured federal dollars to create incentive structure with health systems to incorporate PDMP into EHRs
  - SDOH screening tool
    - Intervention goal – connect patients to health and social resources they need, which is challenging in the fee-for-service world as a non-billable service
    - Policy change – experimentation in alternative payment models provides a pathway to greater sustainability of these types of services

Policy lessons learned

- Policy versus politics

- Procedures and processes

- Patience

- Persistence

- Perspective

- When is the best time to consider the policy implications of your research?
  - From the very beginning.

Questions

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