

“Global” Health Policy Position Statement

Issue being addressed:

Clarification of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society’s desired role in health policy.

Background of issue:

With an international membership of 130,000 active members from 100 countries, STTI has a unique role in global health policy. Its global membership represents all professional roles in nursing and health care, which enriches the international dimension it brings to global health policy. Throughout its history, the international dialogue among members has provided opportunities to learn from each other, to foster communities of interest, and to collaborate within the society as well as with other organizations to advance health policy. In keeping with the organization’s purpose to improve the world’s health through knowledge and scholarship, the membership is engaged in education, clinical practice, and leadership endeavors that inform health policy at local, national, and international levels.

The discipline of nursing brings with it a larger and important social obligation to utilize scholarship and education to promote effective health policy. The scholarly role of STTI’s members in health policy enables the organization to: (1) promote policy where it is important to advance the health of the public, and (2) support research where it would advance and/or help shape better policy. Through collaboration and networking STTI members can become engaged so that policy becomes a social networking tool to share current, pending, and needed research. Member involvement and networking is crucial to the creation and dissemination of knowledge and scholarship that can influence current and future health policy. Research that yields evidence informed practices enables members to advocate for, promote, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions for all the world’s citizens.

Today, health care services remain inaccessible to vast numbers of people throughout the world. Health systems in many developing countries lack the resources and infrastructure needed to assure universal access to even basic health care services. Although most developed countries have well established systems to ensure health care coverage for its residents, many face obstacles to access to health care services as a result of geographic distance or barriers, maldistribution of health care resources and a growing burden of personal, out-of-pocket health expenditures. Moreover, most face rising health care expenditures, aging populations, a growing prevalence of chronic disease, along with a negative economic climate which may exert pressure on some governments to reduce their commitment to strong social protections, including health care (See STTI’s “Universal access to affordable quality health care” position statement, 2009).

Policy or position developed, recommended, adopted:

As a global nursing organization, STTI is committed to advancing the health of the world’s people. In addition to roles as health care providers, nurses must be actively involved in health policy development and system design. Nurses must be actively involved in health policy development, promotion and implementation using the skill set of a global leader. Accordingly, the honor society supports scholarship and education that informs health policy and develops

global leaders so that all citizens are provided effective interventions. Achieving such goals will require engagement of its members to conduct research that results in evidence-informed practices that are disseminated to the global nursing community, thus advocating for improved health outcomes for all citizens. Networking and educational opportunities must be provided by the organization to assure that adoption and further testing of these evidence-informed practices with multicultural groups is possible. The organization should also support research that analyzes the effects of current and proposed health policy so that efficient, effective, and economical concerns can be addressed/modified before extensive adoption occurs.

The scholarship of health policy informs evidence-informed practices, enables the organization to prioritize health issues for the international community, and to target funding for research that will reduce health risks, improve health outcomes, and improve the quality of life for all citizens. STTI can foster engagement of its members on a number of levels so that members meaningfully participate in informing, critiquing, and analyzing current health policies that affect global health. STTI sponsored conferences can provide a vehicle by which members can become informed and can participate on some level with the global health priorities and the research and interventions necessary to improve health outcomes.