How to Talk the Talk: Shaping Your Message to Educate Policymakers

National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health
February 12, 2009

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Connecting resources and knowledge to strengthen the health of people in rural communities.

Center for Rural Health

- Established in 1980, at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Grand Forks, ND
- Focuses on:
  - Education, Training, & Resource Awareness
  - Community Development & Technical Assistance
  - Native American Health
  - Rural Health Workforce
  - Rural Health Research
  - Rural Health Policy
- Web site: http://ruralhealth.und.edu
What is policy framing?

- Beginnings
  - FrameWorks Institute
  - W. K. Kellogg Foundation – Rural People Rural Policy

- FrameWorks research shows the following
  - A form of communications
  - Organizing principles – socially shared – work symbolically
  - “The pictures in our heads” – mental shortcuts
  - Understanding from frame-based, not fact-based
  - Providing cues that link new information with our pre-existing pictures in our heads
  - Changing opinion you must shift the frame

Levels of Understanding

- Level One Frames
  - Big Ideas
    - Freedom, Justice, Equality, Equity, Community, Human Rights, Success, Prevention, Responsibility

- Level Two Frames
  - Issue – Types
    - Environment, Health, Poverty, Education, Child Care, Aging

- Level Three Frames
  - Specific Issues
    - Health Insurance, Access to Care/Services, Hospital Viability, Workforce
Currently Used Rural Frames and Their Impact

- Stereotype 1 – Rural Utopia
- Stereotype 2 – Rural Dystopia
- Stereotype 3 – Rural Needs Protection
- Stereotype 4 – Change is THE Rural Problem

More Effective Frames and Their Potential for Impact

- Fairness Frame
- Interdependence Frame
- Patchwork Simplifying Model
- Causal Sequences
Different Stores – Different Policies

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Some Concrete Examples: What We Have Done

NRHA Policy Institute North Dakota Hill Visits

- **Level 1 Frame** – Equal access to quality health care for all North Dakotans regardless of their degree of rurality, income, or ethnicity
  - All programs supported by federal funds are efforts to accomplish equal access – improve health status
  - Fairness

- **Level 2 Frame** – Capacity building – infrastructure building – safety net
  - Resources, skill set development, linkages, leverage funds
  - Interdependence (collaboration and network development)

- **Level 3 Frame** – Individual rural health programs (e.g., Flex, SORH, SHIP, Outreach and Network Development, SEARCH, AHEC, and other)
Practice Framing…

• How does the public think about this issue?
• What frames are currently used?
• How could the issue be framed?

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