

Associate Professor Narrative Statement Example C — “The Policy Expert”

Primary Area of Distinction: **Population Health & Public Policy**

A candidate who devotes a majority of effort (> 75%) to population health and/or public policy with a minority of effort for education and academic service.

Expected Achievements:

- **Established** level in **Population Health & Public Policy**
 - Entry level in Education
 - Entry level in Academic Service
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J.J. SAMPLE, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Family Medicine & Community Health

I am committed to understanding and addressing the mental health needs of immigrant and refugee populations. Both populations experience enormous stress that can exacerbate pre-existing conditions or provoke new disorders. Yet these individuals have the least access to quality care and without adequate treatment may progress to chronic mental health problems. I was recruited to UMMS to be the mental health expert in a group charged with developing interventions to improve the health care of immigrant and refugee populations in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. My education and experience in psychology, health economics and public policy provide a unique perspective to investigate the mental health needs and costs of vulnerable populations. My position as Senior Research Analyst in the UMMS Center for Health Policy and Research provides the platform and resources to design and implement interventions to address this problem through policy change at the local, state, and, ultimately, national level. I seek promotion to Associate Professor based on my achievements in the Area of Distinction in Population Health & Public Policy, in Education, and in Academic Service.

Area of Distinction in Population Health & Public Policy

To solve a problem you must first understand it. We know that without adequate care the mental health problems of immigrants and refugees may progress to homelessness, incarceration or admission to chronic psychiatric facilities, with consequent costs for state and local authorities. But little is known about the mental health needs of these populations and how they might be addressed. On my appointment here I first conducted an analysis of state and national databases (including NESARC and NCS-R) to document the use of mental health care by immigrants and refugees within Massachusetts. As expected from similar studies we found that these individuals sought care at a much lower rate than native populations. I followed up this study with an analysis of the costs of mental health services to immigrant and refugee populations.

I then used the data from both studies to develop theoretical models for a cost-benefit analysis of state funding for mental health care and the effect of state and federal policy on the cost and access to mental health services for immigrants and refugees in both rural and urban settings. We demonstrated that enhancing acute access to care within community centers results in a significant decrease in the use of chronic psychiatric facilities. Our models predicted an annual savings of \$75 M if such programs were implemented state-wide. These studies were used by the Massachusetts Department of Health and Human Services to support increased funding for community health centers in the 2018 Massachusetts state budget. We have designed and just implemented a state-wide evaluation of the impact of these changes.

To support these studies I am principal investigator on a grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Massachusetts to gain a fuller understanding of immigrants' views of and need for mental health services. I am also co-investigator on a contract with the Massachusetts Center for Health Information and Analysis to evaluate the impact of state funding on access to mental health care.

I have published four peer-reviewed papers since appointment at UMMS; the most recent (Sample et al., 2018), in *Psychiatric Services*, a leading journal in the field, describes the study on access to community mental health services. I am also lead author on three technical reports from the UMMS Center for Health Policy and Research, which describe the analyses of community mental health access, and I have published a toolkit detailing methods for working with immigrant populations in CES4Health, a peer reviewed repository for community-engaged work.

I gave an invited presentation on access to community mental health at the most recent annual meeting of the New England Council of Community Health Centers and have presented grand rounds at Brown, UConn and Tufts. I have also been invited to testify to the State Legislature on community mental health issues on three occasions.

Education

My educational activities focus on graduate education in population health and public policy. I am a member of the Clinical and Population Health Research (CPHR) Graduate Program and I co-direct the section on mental health and vulnerable populations in the Determinants of Health Course for the program, providing five lectures annually. My student evaluations are the second highest for the course. I also currently supervise a graduate student in the program, who has published one paper on our work on mental health interventions. One student has completed her doctoral degree with me, publishing three papers and continuing to a postdoctoral fellowship at UPenn. I currently serve on the doctoral committees of four other students.

Academic Service

I am the departmental representative to Faculty Council and serve on the UMMS Institutional Review Board. I also review regularly for *Psychiatric Services*, *Health Services Research* and the *American Journal of Public Health*, leading journals in my field. In addition, I serve on the Clinical Issues Committee for the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers.

Summary

I seek to improve the mental health of some of the most vulnerable members of our society—the immigrants and refugees who have made extraordinary and often stressful journeys to make Massachusetts their new home. The mission of the University of Massachusetts Medical School is to advance the health and well-being of the people of the Commonwealth. I am proud to continue my work as a faculty member at UMMS.