

Choose an Idea to Improve State Public Policy for Addiction Medicine

Introduction

You may have already chosen a policy goal for your state. If not, consider some of the following themes:

1. Expanding Access to Treatment

How:

- **Increased Funding:** Allocating additional state funds to support addiction treatment centers and programs and ensuring they have the necessary resources to operate effectively.
- **Medicaid Expansion:** Ensuring that Medicaid covers comprehensive addiction treatment services, including medications for addiction treatment (MAT), counseling, and inpatient care.
- **Telemedicine:** Promoting and protecting the use of telemedicine to provide addiction treatment services, particularly in rural or underserved areas with limited access to care.

2. Strengthening the Workforce

How:

- **Workforce Development:** Investing in training and certification programs for addiction treatment professionals to ensure they possess the latest knowledge and skills.
- **Loan Repayment Programs:** Establishing loan repayment programs for healthcare professionals working in addiction medicine, particularly in underserved areas.
- **Provider Support:** Providing ongoing support and professional development opportunities for addiction treatment providers to prevent burnout and high turnover rates.

3. Improving Data Collection and Utilization

How:

- **Integrated Data Systems:** Developing integrated data systems that facilitate the sharing of information across healthcare providers, treatment centers, and state agencies.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the effectiveness of addiction treatment programs and policies.
- **Research Partnerships:** Partnering with academic institutions and research organizations to conduct studies on addiction trends and treatment outcomes.

4. Supporting Recovery and Reintegration

How:

- **Recovery Housing:** Increasing the availability of recovery housing options that provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals in recovery. Ban drug test review by nonmedical roommates and recovery housing staff to prevent evictions based on incorrect interpretation of testing.
- **Employment Programs:** Creating employment programs that offer job training and placement services for individuals in recovery, helping them achieve financial stability.
- **Peer Support Services:** Expanding peer support services, which connect individuals in recovery with others who have successfully navigated the path to recovery.

5. Reducing Legal Barriers

How:

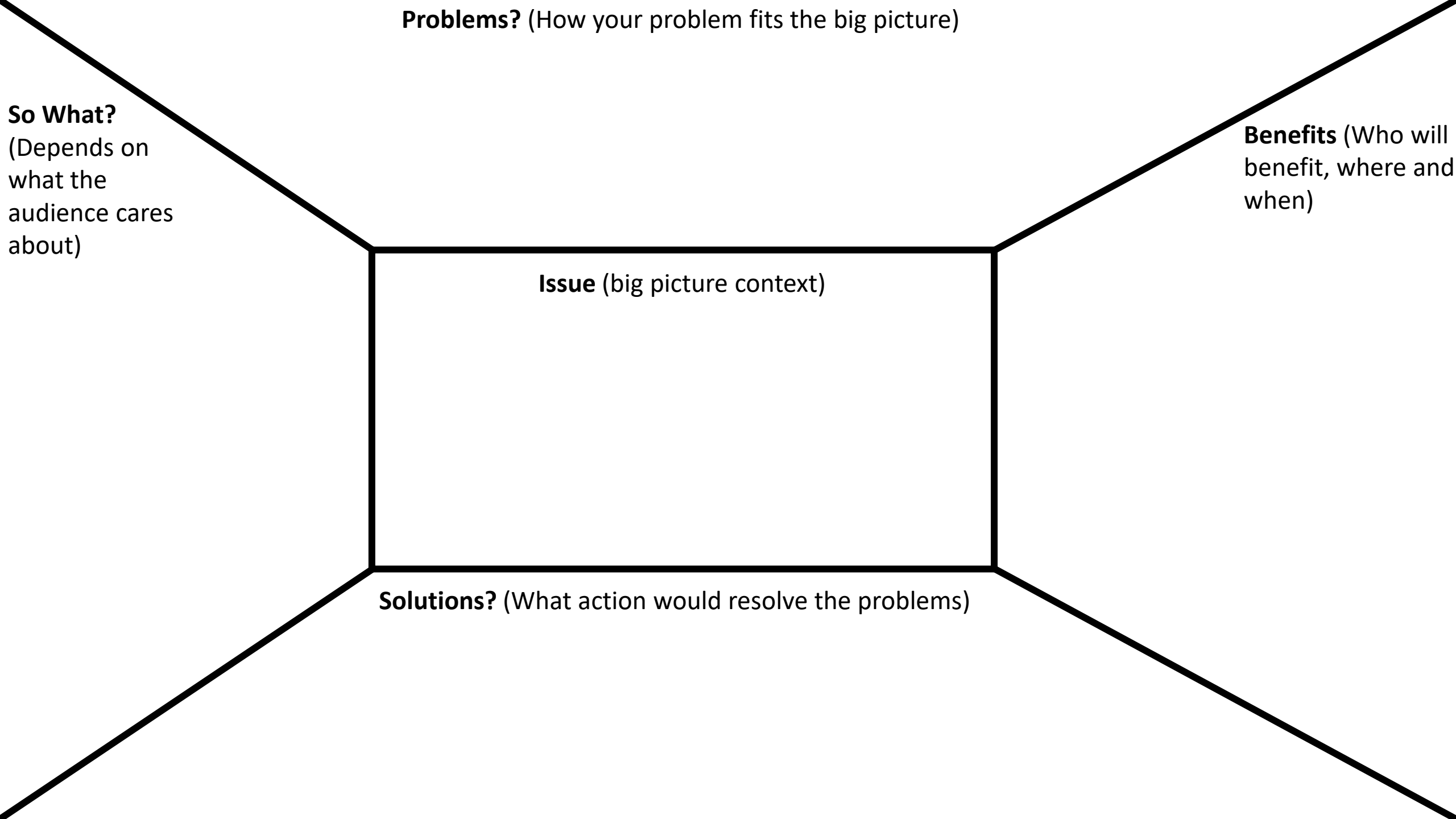
- **Decriminalization:** Considering the decriminalization and focusing on treatment rather than incarceration for non-violent drug offenses.
- **Expungement Programs:** Implementing programs that allow individuals with drug-related convictions to have their records expunged, enabling them to access housing, employment, and educational opportunities.
- **Good Samaritan Laws:** Enacting or strengthening Good Samaritan laws that protect individuals who seek help for themselves or others during an overdose from legal repercussions.

6. Increasing Access to MAT in Jails and Prisons

How:

- **Funding:** Create state grants to fund the care and technical assistance. Ask your state to develop jail and prison MAT protocols.(NOW SURE IF THIS IS WHAT YOU WERE INTENDING?)
- **Educate:** Teach jail and prison staff to run evidence-based substance use disorder treatment programs.
- **Community Outreach:** Launching community outreach initiatives that raise awareness about addiction, promote healthy lifestyles, and provide resources for those in need.

- **Public Campaigns:** Investing in public awareness campaigns that address the stigma of addiction and encourage individuals to seek help.



Problems? (How your problem fits the big picture)

Benefits (Who will benefit, where and when)

Issue (big picture context)

Solutions? (What action would resolve the problems)

So What?
(Depends on what the audience cares about)

Advocate and Inspire

**Stephanie Stewart,
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Figure 1 - Pexels

From burn out to burn in!

Burnout has been defined as work-related experience that results in: depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and low personal accomplishment. It can result in incredible suffering for physicians, NPs, PAs, nurses, therapists, and other medical staff.

We cannot control all the things that tire us out at work, but we do have the power to alter something that is key to our health and enjoyment of medicine—our sense of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is your belief that you can exert control over your own motivation, behavior, and social environment. When we feel capable of making changes to ourselves and our situations, we perform better and reach goals using less energy.¹

When we achieve something difficult, we feel more capable of trying something new. This is a virtuous cycle that can improve internal motivation, life satisfaction, and benefit us, our families and friends, and our communities.

Research suggests that people who have a greater sense of self-efficacy experience lower rates of burnout.² Self-efficacy protected even people with traits that are associated with higher levels of burnout (such as introversion or a tendency towards negative thinking).

Advocating for policy change can help you feel more effective and connected to your community. You will get to know colleagues and elected officials who share your values and who are determined to reduce obstacles to meaningful, effective medical practice. You don't need to take on too much to succeed. A small amount of your time and talent goes a long way!

“People’s beliefs about their abilities have a profound effect on those abilities.”

— Albert Bandura

Physicians tend to be less involved in policy simply because they do not know how to start working on these issues.³ You can contact your state ASAM chapter to find out what they’re doing. To avoid exhaustion while advocating, choose one achievable goal you care the most about, and make time to enjoy yourself.

By advocating for policy change, you keep alive the original flame that led you to choose medicine in the first place. Purpose can protect you.

References:

- 1) Michael P. Carey, PhD and Andrew D. Forsyth
Department of Psychology, Syracuse University. Teaching Tip Sheet: Self-Efficacy. American Psychological Association.
- 2) Yao Y, Zhao S, Gao X, An Z, Wang S, Li H, Li Y, Gao L, Lu L, Dong Z. General self-efficacy modifies the effect of stress on burnout in nurses with different personality types. BMC Health Serv Res. 2018 Aug 29;18(1):667. doi: 10.1186/s12913-018-3478-y. PMID: 30157926; PMCID: PMC6114188.
- 3) Liepert AE, Beilke S, Levenson G, Sheehy AM. Health Policy Advocacy Engagement: A Physician Survey. WMJ. 2021 Apr;120(1):29-33. PMID: 33974762.



Figure 2 - Shutterstock