**Worksheet Directions for Instructors**

**Purpose**:

To help students recognize the role value judgments play in making public health policy recommendations. Insofar as public health policies involve coercion of some kind, making a policy recommendation will always involve some kind of value judgment. Do the public health gains to the greater good outweigh the cost to liberty?

**Completion instructions:**

Students are to fill out the table for each pathogen.

* *Policy measure*: students are to write the relevant policy measure from the list provided
* *Benefit to the Greater Good*: students are to estimate the expected public health benefit resulting from the policy.
* *Cost to Liberty*: students are to estimate the liberty cost involved in instituting the policy
* *Policy recommendation*: students are to make a recommendation as to whether the policy should be pursued or not based on whether the benefit to the greater good outweighs the cost to liberty.

**Modification Suggestion:**

Instructors can provide different instructions to those supplied on the worksheet. Feel free to experiment.

If class time is limited, for a simple, time saving option, have student quickly jot down their intuitions:

* Have students write “low”, “moderate” or “high” in the “greater good” and “liberty” boxes;
* Have students write “unacceptable,” “acceptable,” or “great,” in the “policy recommendation” box.

If the “simple” method is used, it highly recommended to ask student to offer their reasoning verbally.

**Grading suggestions:**

To limit the amount of grading, we recommend either assigning participation credit to students who complete the exercise, or simply grading it as complete/incomplete.

**Worksheet: Weighing Liberty Against the Greater Good**

**Instructions:**

An infectious pathogen is coursing through the community. You are a public health official tasked with recommending a response. Below is a list of pathogen descriptions and a list of policy measures for dealing with the pathogens. For each pathogen, your task is to weigh the public health benefits of each policy measure against the cost to liberty that will result from instituting that policy. Use the provided tables.

***Pathogens***

* **Pathogen #1:**

R0: 0.8

Transmission: close physical contact

Symptom: painful rash, enlarged lymph nodes, fever, rarely fatal

* **Pathogen #2:**

R0: 1.5-2

Transmission: direct contact, body fluid

Symptoms: fever, headache, muscle pain, internal bleeding, high rate of mortality

* **Pathogen #3:**

R0: 2-6

Transmission: air droplet, contact with infected secretions

Symptoms: mild to severe illnesses associated with respiratory system, elderly are vulnerable

***Policy Measures***

* Public health campaign
* Mask mandate
* Quarantining the sick
* Voluntary stay-at-home
* Mandatory lockdown

Use the provided table to record your thought process for each pathogen.

* Under “Policy Measure” write the policy measure you are considering
* Under “Benefit to the Greater Good”, record your estimation of the public health benefits of the policy measure. For example, how much will the policy recommendation reduce transmission? Is the gain large or small?
* Under “Cost to Liberty” record your estimation of the cost to public liberty. What specific liberties are at stake? Is the cost to liberty high or low?
* Under “Policy Recommendation” record whether you recommend the policy and a brief justification. Does the gain in public health justify the cost liberty?

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| **Pathogen 1:**  R0: 0.8  Transmission: close physical contact  Symptom: painful rash, enlarged lymph nodes, fever, rarely fatal | | | |
| **Policy measure** | **Benefit to the greater good** | **Cost to liberty** | **Policy Recommendation** |
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| **Pathogen 2:**  R0: 1.5-2  Transmission: direct contact, body fluid  Symptoms: fever, headache, muscle pain, internal bleeding, high rate of mortality | | | |
| **Policy measure** | **Benefit to the greater good** | **Cost to liberty** | **Policy Recommendation** |
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| **Pathogen #3:**  R0: 2-6  Transmission: air droplet, contact with infected secretions  Symptoms: mild to severe illnesses associated with respiratory system, elderly are vulnerable | | | |
| **Policy measure** | **Benefit to the greater good** | **Cost to liberty** | **Policy Recommendation** |
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Questions for Further Reflection

1. What difficulties did you run into when it came to making policy recommendations? How might a public health official go about resolving such difficulties in a “real world” setting?
2. How do your policy recommendations change as you vary the weights you give to public health and liberty?
3. How do your policy recommendations change when you give absolute weight to liberty? What about absolute weight to public health?
4. Imagine that policy recommendations with greater cost to liberty result in lower public acceptance of the policy. Will this change any of your policy recommendations?
5. Is it possible to make public health recommendations without making value judgments? Why/why not?
6. Did you recommend “mandatory stay at home” for any pathogen? What kind of pathogen would justify this kind of policy recommendation?