

**University of Wyoming
PHCY 5245
Medicare, Medicaid, and the
Affordable Care Act**

**Fall 2026
August 31 – October 4**



PHCY 5245 Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY/ CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Email: d-nau@uwyo.edu

PHCY 5245 Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act is a two-semester hour course that examines the structure, coverage, and operation of federal health programs. The course is taught with a focus on health policy as reflected in the programs funded by federal resources. The primary focus on the course is on Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Primary attention is paid to pharmaceutical benefits under these programs, although all aspects of the programs are studied.

COURSE STRUCTURE & OUTLINE:

This course will address the following subjects:

- The politics of health care organization and financing.
- Medicare.
- Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program.
- The Affordable Care Act.
- Pharmaceuticals as a challenge and as an opportunity in federal health programs.
- Ongoing efforts to achieve federal health care reforms.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND GOALS:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Discuss the current climate of health care reforms at the federal level.
- Describe how the creation, administration, and funding of federal health care programs reflects the underlying cultural values and institutions within the United States.
- Describe the scope and function of the Medicare program.
- Describe the relationship between the federal government and the states in the funding and implementation of the Medicaid program.
- Discuss federal policy toward access, cost, and quality of pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical services.
- List factors that impede the implementation of comprehensive federal health care programs.
- Describe federal public health programs

REQUIRED TEXTS /LEARNING RESOURCES:

There is no required textbook for this course. See the course schedule and Wyocourse site for reading assignments for each week. I also encourage you to monitor the Kaiser Family Foundation website for up-to-date news on various health policy issues (www.kff.org)

CLASS WEBSITE:

The WyoCourses site is accessible from the University website via WyoWeb. Class lectures and slide sets will be posted or linked on this site. Assignments will also be posted there. The student is expected to utilize the site and accept changes from this syllabus as amended on the site.

ASYNCHRONOUS COURSE:

This course will have NO live meetings; however, there will be weekly online discussions. The instructor is available via email for questions about the course procedures and the content covered in the course.

COURSE PROCEDURES:

Since this is an asynchronous online course, there are no live class meetings. Learning materials will be posted on WyoCourses and may be accessed at any time. Interaction with the instructor and your classmates will rely heavily on an active discussion board. Participation in the discussion board is mandatory. There will be four quizzes that will open on Friday and must be completed by Sunday at 11pm.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR POLICY:

At all times, treat your presence in the classroom and your enrollment in this course as you would any professional activity. Act professionally, arrive on time, pay attention, complete your work in a timely and professional manner, and treat all deadlines seriously. All of us will be respectful of each other. Spirited debate and disagreement are to be expected in any graduate level course and all views will be heard fully, but at all times we will behave civilly and with respect towards one another. Personal attacks, offensive language, name-calling, and dismissive gestures are not warranted in a learning atmosphere. This is a safe environment and as the instructor, I have the right to dismiss anyone from the classroom, study sessions, electronic forums, and other areas where disruptive behavior occurs – there is zero tolerance on this issue.

Any and all disruptive behaviors will be referred to the Dean of Students Office using the UWYO Cares Reporting Form for Student Code of Conduct processes (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofWyoming&layout_id=5).

CLASSROOM STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY:

The University of Wyoming values an educational environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The diversity that students and faculty bring to class, including age, country of origin, culture, disability, economic class, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, linguistic, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, worldview, and other social and cultural diversity is valued, respected, and considered a resource for learning. Diversity helps all of us gain a better understanding and perspective of the subjects we will be covering in the course.

DISABILITY SUPPORT:

The University of Wyoming is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you have a disability, including but not limited to physical, learning, sensory or psychological disabilities, and would like to request accommodations in this course due to your disability, please register with and provide documentation of your disability as soon as possible to Disability Support Services (DSS), Room 128 Knight Hall. You may also contact DSS at (307) 766-3073 or udss@uwyo.edu. It is in the student's best interest to request accommodation within the first week of classes, understanding that accommodations are not retroactive. Visit the DSS website for more information at: www.uwyo.edu/udss

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICIES:

Academic dishonesty, discrimination, and harassment will not be tolerated in this class! Cases of academic dishonesty will be treated in accordance with UW Regulation 2-114. The penalties for academic dishonesty can include, at my discretion, an “F” on an exam, an “F” on the class component exercise, and/or an “F” in the entire course. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, which means anything that represents someone else’s ideas as your own without attribution. It is intellectual theft – stealing - and includes (but is not limited to) unapproved assistance on examinations, plagiarism (use of any amount of another person’s writings, blog posts, publications, and other materials without attributing that material to that person with citations), or fabrication of referenced information. Facilitation of another person’s academic dishonesty is also considered academic dishonesty and will be treated identically.

Such conduct is described within and will result in sanctions pursuant to the following School of Pharmacy and University policy and regulations:

University of Wyoming Code of Conduct

<http://www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct/> University

of Wyoming Regulations

http://www.uwyo.edu/generalcounsel/_files/docs/UW%20Reg%20Updates%202016/UW%20Reg%206-802.pdf

DUTY TO REPORT:

While this is a safe environment and I want you all to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that I have some reporting obligations that are part of my faculty requirements at UW.

For example, if you inform me of an issue of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution’s Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to talk to those offices directly, you can contact Equal Opportunity Report and Response (Bureau of Mines Room 319, 766-5200, report-it@uwyo.edu, www.uwyo.edu/reportit). Additionally, you can also report incidents or complaints to the UW Police Department. You can also get support at the STOP Violence program (stopviolence@uwyo.edu, www.uwyo.edu/stop, 766-3296) (or SAFE Project (www.safeproject.org, campus@safeproject.org, 766- 3434, 24-Hour hotline: 745-3556).

Another common example is if you are struggling with an issue that may be traumatic or unusual stress. I will likely inform the Dean of Students Office or Counseling Center. If you would like to reach out directly to them for assistance, you can contact them using the info below or going to www.uwyo.edu/dos/uwyocares.

Finally, know that if, for some reason, our interaction involves disruptive behavior or potential violation of policy, I must inform the Dean of Students, even when you and I may have reached an informal resolution to the incident. The purpose of this is to keep the Dean apprised of any behaviors (by students or faculty) and what was done to resolve them.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS:

All deadlines, requirements, and course structure are subject to change if deemed necessary by the instructor. Students will be notified verbally in class or on our WyoCourses announcement page and/or via email of these changes.

STUDENT RESOURCES:

- DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES: udss@uwyo.edu, 766-3073, 128 Knight Hall, www.uwyo.edu/udss
- COUNSELING CENTER: uccstaff@uwyo.edu, 766-2187, 766-8989, 341 Knight Hall, www.uwyo.edu/ucc
- ACADEMIC AFFAIRS: 766-4286, 312 Old Main, www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs
- DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE: dos@uwyo.edu, 766-3296, 128 Knight Hall, www.uwyo.edu/dos UW
- POLICE DEPARTMENT: uwpd@uwyo.edu, 766-5179, 1426 E Flint St, www.uwyo.edu/uwpd
- STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT WEBSITE: www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct

"If you have a physical, learning, sensory or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You will need to register with, and possibly provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Support Services (DSS), room 109 Knight Hall. You may also contact DSS at (307) 766-3073 or udss@uwyo.edu. Visit their website for more information: www.uwyo.edu/udss."

Post pandemic Policies – While the pandemic has subsided, you must abide by all UW policies and public health rules put forward by the City of Laramie (or by Natrona County if at UW-Casper), the University of Wyoming and the State of Wyoming to promote the health and well-being of fellow students and your own personal self- care. The current policy is provided for review at: <https://www.uwyo.edu/alerts/campus-return/index.html>

HyFlex, Zoom, and WyoCourses expectations:

As with all UW coursework, this course will be educational and useful to you. I will respond to questions, concerns, and feedback in a timely manner.

Your responsibilities:

- Give and receive feedback from me and your classmates respectfully and constructively in all interactions. This includes in Zoom chats, on WyoCourses boards, and within physical classroom spaces.
- Actively engage in civil discourse in a respectful manner. Use professional language in all course related forums.
- Communicate professionally. Whenever you send class-related email or messages, please include a clear, specific subject line and use the body of the email or message to explain the purpose for the email and any attached materials. Conduct yourself professionally.
- Meet assignment deadlines. We expect that you are interacting with course material multiple times during the week.
- Ask for help when you need it. For academic assistance on this course please contact me for available resources. For Dean of Students assistance please see: <https://www.uwyo.edu/dos/student-resources/covid-19-student-resources.html>
- Please let us know if you notice another student who needs help in our (anonymous) WyoCares referral option (<https://www.uwyo.edu/dos/students-concern/index.html>).

Information Technology (IT): If you have any IT related challenges, please contact the UWIT Service Center:

<https://uwyo.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/1940/Portal/Requests/ServiceDet?ID=8890>

Syllabus Changes: I will alert you to any possible course format changes in response to UW decisions about community safety during the semester.

Information Technology (IT): If you have any IT related challenges, please contact the UWIT Service Center: <https://uwyo.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/1940/Portal/Requests/ServiceDet?ID=8890>

GRADES

A: 90.0 – 100.0
B: 80.0 – 89.9
C: 70.0 – 79.9
D: 60.0 – 69.9
F: <60.0

Discussion participation (5 x 7% each) = 35%
Quizzes (5 x 10% each) = 50%
Final Paper = 15%

Discussion Board

Successful discussion board participation requires one original post and one responsive post each week.

Quizzes

Quizzes will open by Friday each week and must be completed by Sunday at 11pm each week. Students may contact the instructor to discuss a make-up date for the quiz in the event they cannot complete it in the specified timeframe.

Final Paper

Students must submit a paper on a topic related to healthcare reform. The topic must be submitted to the instructor by September 24 and must be approved by the instructor. The paper should be no less than 4 full pages of text plus a reference section. The paper should use spacing of 1.5 with 11-point font and 1-inch margins. Details will be provided in the Wyocourse site.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

DATES & TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1 (Aug 31-Sep 6) Paying for Healthcare in the U.S. and the ACA	Watch: 1) Course overview video 2) Video lecture on Quality and Costs for Healthcare Read: https://www.kff.org/health-policy-101-health-care-costs-and-affordability/ Read: https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/how-much-is-health-spending-expected-to-grow/ Discuss: Participate in the online discussion (Wed-Sat) Quiz: Complete the online quiz by Sunday, Sep 6 (11pm)
Week 2 (Sep 7 – Sep 13) Medicare	Read: https://www.kff.org/health-policy-101-medicare/ Read: https://www.kff.org/medicare/key-facts-about-medicare-drug-price-negotiation/

	Discuss: Participate in the online discussion (Wed-Sat) Quiz: Complete the online quiz by Sunday, Sept 7 (11pm)
Week 3 (Sep 14 – 20) Medicaid / CHIP	Read: https://www.kff.org/health-policy-101-medicaid/ Read: https://www.kff.org/medicaid/medicaid-enrollment-tracker/ Optional: https://www.kff.org/event/medicaid-and-the-road-ahead/ Discuss: Participate in the online discussion (Wed-Sat) Quiz: Complete the online quiz by Sunday, Sept 20 (11pm)
Week 4 (Sep 21 – 27) Affordable Care Act and Uninsured	Read: https://www.kff.org/health-policy-101-the-affordable-care-act/ Read: https://www.kff.org/health-policy-101-the-uninsured-population-and-health-coverage/ Discuss: Participate in the online discussion (Wed-Sat) Quiz: Complete the online quiz by Sunday, Sept 27 (11pm) Submit paper topic to Dr. Nau via email by Sept 24.
Week 5 (Sep 28 – Oct 4) Payment & Funding Changes	Read: https://www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation-center/value-based-care-spotlight/providers Read: https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/brief/how-much-and-why-aca-marketplace-premiums-are-going-up-in-2027/ Read the posted slides on Quality and VBP Discuss: Participate in the online discussion (Wed-Sat) Quiz: Complete the online quiz by Sunday, Oct 4 (11pm) Write: Final Paper (due on Sunday, October 11)