

# Health Impact Assessment (HIA): Linking Public Health to Community Decisions

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## Health in All Policies

Health impact assessment (HIA) is one of the key strategies for moving toward a health in all policies (HiAP) perspective.

- Offers a comprehensive approach to health
- Applicable in a broad range of decision-making contexts -

Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach that integrates and articulates health considerations into policymaking across sectors, and at all levels, to improve the health of all communities and people. – Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), 2013

**Goal of Health in All Policies:** Ensure decision-makers consider the intentional and unintentional health, equity, and sustainability impacts of policies during the policy development process. – Adapted from California Health in All Policies Task Force, 2010



Source: Georgia Health Policy Center



Source: The Bipartisan Policy Center

#### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** Office of Research and Development

The views expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

#### **Around the Nation** A breakdown of health-care spending state by state





## **HIA in Priority Research Areas**



## **Environmental Justice & Equity**

HIA considers distribution of health impacts across the population (paying specific attention to vulnerable groups) and recommends ways to improve proposed decisions for affected groups.

Equity is a core value of HIA.

Equity in health implies that ideally everyone should have a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential and, more pragmatically, that none should be disadvantaged from achieving this potential, if it can be avoided. – Margaret Whitehead, 1992

Health Care Costs

Health care consumes a large percentage of state budgets.

HIA is a promising tool to improve people's health and decrease health care costs because of its "broad applicability, its focus on adverse and beneficial health effects, its ability to incorporate various types of evidence, and its emphasis on stakeholder participation." - National Research Council, 2011

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## **HIA in Priority Research Areas**



#### Proctor Creek's Boone Boulevard Green Street Project Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

**Conducted by:** U.S. EPA Office of Research and Development and Region 4

Location: Atlanta, GA

Status: Complete



#### California Drinking Water Project Funding HIA

**Conducted by:** The Sequoia Foundation, California Department of Public Health, and the Public Health Institute

Location: California

Status: In Progress



#### Lincoln Park Small Area Plan Health Impact Assessment

**Conducted by:** Minnesota Department of Health and the City of Duluth

*Location:* Duluth, MN

Status: Complete

## Green infrastructure is being considered as a best management practice across the U.S.

- Topography, prevalence of impervious surfaces, and a strained combined sewer system contribute to pervasive flooding in the Proctor Creek communities (Atlanta, GA) and have created environmental, public health, economic, and redevelopment issues.
- A green street project was proposed in the Proctor Creek Watershed to address some of the community's needs.
- This EPA-led HIA examined impacts to the low income, minority community within a half mile of the proposed project.
- HIA demonstrated the net public health benefits of green infrastructure reach beyond the environmental sector and include social and economic benefits, also.
- Recommendations of this HIA were used by the City of Atlanta to inform planning and implementation of the project.

## The State of California revises its drinking water project priorities annually.

- The Sequoia Foundation, in collaboration with the California Department of Public Health and the Public Health Institute, is conducting an HIA to inform the 2016 Drinking Water Intended Use Plan.
- Data-driven decisions about funding allocations can improve access to safe and reliable drinking water, especially in rural communities that lack advanced infrastructure.
- This HIA will provide recommendations to the California Water Board on criteria used to determine funding for drinking water projects and will work to standardize the use of HIA among California agencies.
- Recommendations of this HIA will also help inform future California water resource policies.

Minnesota Brownfields, the Minnesota Department of Health, and a University of Minnesota student partnered to develop an HIA Brownfields Tool.

- The tool helps illuminate the connection between public health and Brownfield redevelopment and provides a way to meaningfully engage the community in the redevelopment planning process.
- The tool was pilot tested in the Lincoln Park Small Area Plan (SAP) HIA.
- This HIA examined the Lincoln Park SAP and its objectives to revamp zoning, redevelop Brownfields, promote business and mixed-use development, expand recreation, lower crime, improve transportation and housing, and more.
- The HIA provided the City of Duluth with health information and evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the SAP could be improved to create a healthier, more vibrant neighborhood.







#### Health Impact Assessment of Proposed Code Changes for Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems in Suffolk County, NY

**Conducted by:** U.S. EPA Office of Research and Development and Region 4

Location: Suffolk County, NY

Status: In Progress

Suffolk County, NY is considering changes to its sanitary code that would require onsite sewage disposal systems (OSDS) for residential properties to be upgraded to a conventional or innovative/alternative OSDS.

- The proposed changes are being considered to address a growing issue of nutrient loading of Suffolk County soil, surface waters, and ground waters.
- Overloading of nutrients, particularly nitrogen, has been linked to the impairment of surface and ground waters, beach closures, shellfish population die offs, harmful algal blooms, and damage of marine coastlines.
- This EPA-led HIA will inform the decision regarding changes to the sanitary code and provide recommendations to maximize potential benefits and mitigate potential adverse impacts to health that may result from the decision.

#### Mojave Desert Solar Energy Projects and Tribal Communities: A Health Impact Assessment Project

*Conducted by:* National Indian Justice Center

*Location:* Ft. Irwin Army Base, CA

Status: Complete

Ft. Irwin began plans to build a photovoltaic (PV) array site in order to meet the renewable energy mandate of the military.

- There were concerns that the environmental assessment (EA) conducted as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process had not adequately addressed impacts to tribal communities in the region.
- This HIA examined eight areas assessed in the EA that were relevant to health and two tribal community health determinants to identify the potential physical, spiritual, and mental health impacts of the project on tribal communities.
- The HIA provided the U.S. Army health information, cultural considerations, mitigation measures, and recommendations to help inform the PV array facility development and maximize the health benefits of the proposed project.

### Climate Smart Strategy Health Impact Assessment

*Conducted by:* Oregon Health Authority

*Location:* Portland, OR Metropolitan Region

Status: Complete

The Portland Metropolitan Region (Metro) undertook a Climate Smart Communities Scenarios (CSCS) planning effort to meet the state's legislative mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from light duty cars and trucks to 20% below 2005 levels by 2035.

- Oregon Health Authority conducted an HIA on Phase 3 of the CSCS Project.
- This HIA quantified and monetized health impacts of the three proposed scenarios and draft (preferred) approach to help decision-makers understand the impacts and weigh tradeoffs.
- The HIA provided Metro and its partners, health information and evidence-based recommendations to support the selection of a healthy final scenario that gives residents equal access to health transportation options and healthpromoting resources.





