Health Impact Assessments

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process that helps evaluate the potential health effects of a plan, project or policy before it is built or implemented. An HIA can provide recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and minimize adverse health effects. An HIA brings potential public health impacts and considerations to the decision-making process for plans, projects, and policies that fall outside the traditional public health arenas such as transportation, housing and agriculture.

The Health Planning Council is poised to work with members of the community including cross-sector public and private stakeholders and the non-profit community to introduce health, well-being and equity into the development and implementation of policies in all sectors of the region.

Projects that benefit from an HIA are those that have the potential to result in substantial effects on public health, where such an analysis might significantly protect or promote the health of a population.

Why do an HIA?

- Influence decision-makers using a broad understanding of health
- Build community support and reduce opposition to a proposal or project
- Highlight potentially significant health impacts that are unknown, unrecognized or unexpected
- Assess how proposals will affect all members of the community, especially the most vulnerable
- Provides a comprehensive analysis of issues and helps identify trade-offs in decision-making
- Speeds up project approvals
- Promote sustainable development, considering short and long-term impacts
- Encourage a greater appreciation of public health in the policy-making process

How Does an HIA Start?

An HIA can be initiated by public health practitioners, community groups, advocacy organizations, affected stakeholders, responsible public agencies, or policy-makers who are interested in the consideration of health in a decision-making process.

If you are interested in initiating an HIA, please contact:

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Health Impact Assessments

HIAs have been conducted on:

- Land use and transportation plans and projects
- Natural resource projects
- Education and Employment policies
- Agriculture and Healthy Food Access projects/policies
- Affordable Housing Projects

HIAs have resulted in:

- Quantified financial impacts to the community of various decisions on policy/projects
- Influenced policies and projects in a way that improves health and diminishes negative health outcomes
- Built Relationships and collaborations
- Built consensus around decisions
- Engaged and empowered communities

FOR A CONSULTATION CALL:

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HIA Process:

1. Screening: Determines the need and value of an HIA
2. Scoping: Determines which health impacts to evaluate, methods of analysis, and work plan for completing the assessment
3. Assessment: Provides a profile of existing health conditions and evaluation of health impacts
4. Recommendations: Provides strategies to manage and mitigate health impacts
5. Reporting: Includes development of the HIA report and communication of findings and recommendations
6. Monitoring: Tracks impacts of the HIA on the decision making process and the decision, as well of the impacts of the decisions on health determinants

The HIA process is flexible to the needs and goals of the project or policy. Ideally, an HIA should be completed prior to the decision is made or policy is implemented.

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