

# Overview of the Health Impact Assessment Process

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# Objectives

## Overview of Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

- HIA Goals & Objectives & Values

## Types of HIAs

- Desk Based, Rapid, Intermediate Comprehensive

## Overview of the Six Steps in Conducting HIA

## HIA Examples & Resources

# Health Impact Assessment (HIA)



A systematic process that uses an array of data sources and analytic methods and considers input from stakeholders to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIA provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects.

*National Research Council, Improving Health in the United States: The Role of Health Impact Assessment, 2011.*

# Why use HIA?

The effects policies have on health, and in particular, how they can alter the health of *all* people in the population.

Non-health sector decisions, where health is not the main objective, may have major effects on the health and well-being of people, particularly vulnerable groups.

# Values of Health Impact Assessment

HIA aims to advance the values of:

- Democracy
- Equity
- Sustainable Development
- Ethical Use of Evidence

# HIA ...

HIA is an approach that:

- Gets people to think about what they are doing,
- How these decisions may alter people's health.

HIA promotes health:

- Long term contributions to the health of local people



Example: Imagine Richmond is planning to build a subway rail system.

Question: What would the HIA answer?

# In this Example a HIA Would Answer...

*“How would this new development affect people’s health?”.*

- Would the subway increase or decrease noise, air or light pollution?
- How would the subway affect local businesses and jobs?
- Would the new subway reduce or increase the stress for local people?
- How would a new subway change the local infrastructure needs - and would this be good or bad for local people?



# The Purpose/Function of HIA is to:

- Inform and influence the decision maker
- Help address inequalities in health.
- Promote joined-up working.
- Place public health on the agenda
- Reduce conflict between stakeholders
- Encourage sustainable development



# HIA purpose/function is achieved by:

- Using a broad understanding of health.
- Using a participatory approach that considers which stakeholders need to be involved
- Helping involve local people in decisions and responding to their concerns about health.
- Considering different types of evidence - from local views to scientific information.
- Assessing how the proposal will affect all members of the community - particularly the most vulnerable.
- Assisting with sustainable development by considering short and long term impacts.

# Many factors that impact health

- The social and economic environment
- The physical environment
- The person's individual characteristics and behaviours.
  - For example, income and social status - higher income and social status are linked to better health. The greater the gap between the richest and poorest people, the greater the differences in health.
  - For example, education - low education levels are linked with poor health, more stress and lower self-confidence.

# Different Types of HIAs

Desk Based	Rapid	Intermediate	Comprehensive
2-4 Weeks	6-12 Weeks	12 Weeks to six Month	6-12 Months for one person full time
Provides broad overview of potential health impacts	Provides more detailed overview of potential health impacts	Provides a more thorough assessment of potential health impacts, and more detail on specific predicted impacts	Provides a comprehensive assessment of potential health impacts.

# When is an HIA Undertaken?

Before implementation  
(prospective) - to allow steps to  
be taken to change a proposal at  
the planning stage.



# Six Steps of HIA

1. **Screening** - determine if HIA is useful for specific project or policy
2. **Scoping** - identify health effects to consider
3. **Assessment** - perform research, determine populations affected & how
4. **Recommendations** - suggest changes to proposal to promote positive or mitigate adverse health effects
5. **Reporting** - present results to decision-makers
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation** - determine effect of HIA on decision process

# Step 1: Screening

## What is HIA Screening?

The Screening process helps determine if:

- ... the HIA is feasible
  - Is there sufficient information about the decision?
  - Is there available resources to conduct the HIA?
- ... the HIA can be done in a timely manner
  - Can the HIA fit within the decision-making time frame?
- ... the HIA would add value to the decision making process
  - Is health already at the table?
  - Will the proposed project benefit from an HIA and promote health and influence positive change to the community?

# Step 2: Scoping



Two Main Goals:

1. Create the plan for the HIA
2. Determine health indicators to be assessed

# Step 3: Assessment

Assessment - perform research, determine populations affected & how

Main goals:

1. Profile baseline conditions, characteristics of target populations
2. Analyze potential health effects of decisions





# Step 4: Recommendations

Use results from assessment to develop recommendations which may include:

- Alternative ways to design a project, plan, or policy including its location or timing to benefit health
- Mitigations - management strategies to lessen anticipated adverse health effects of a decision

# Step 5: Reporting

## Two main products:

- Develop full HIA report and communicate findings and recommendations
- Develop a succinct summary for effective communication



# Step 6: Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring—What happened?

Monitor recommendations & implementation

- Were the HIA recommendations adopted?
- Has the policy, program or plan been implemented?

Monitor health determinants and outcomes

- Were there changes in exposures, health outcomes/determinants & any unexpected consequences

# Virginia HIA Examples

- Building a new transit center along Richmond Highway Corridor in Northern Virginia
- Proposed poultry litter-to-energy facility in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

# Resources about HIA

Many examples of HIA are available on:

[www.who.int/hia](http://www.who.int/hia)

[www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm)

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/OMHHE/healthequity/hia/index.htm>

These sites also provides information:

- About HIA

- Tools and methods to do HIA

- How HIA contributes to policy making

- The evidence used in HIA

- HIA related links and networks.

# Thank You

Questions  
Comments

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