

12-01

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Health in All Policies

Policy

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a coordinated and systems-based governance strategy that integrates health, equity, and long-term community well-being into decision-making across all levels of government.^{1,2} HiAP recognizes that policies in sectors such as transportation, housing, land use, infrastructure, energy, and economic development significantly influence the social and physical determinants of health.^{1,2} A modern HiAP framework embeds public health into policies across sectors and supports governance-aligned, collaborative, and publicly informed decision-making processes that integrate health considerations throughout planning, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation.^{1,2} Through early and systematic consideration of potential health impacts, HiAP advances health for the entire population, reduces unintended harms, and strengthens long-term community resilience.¹

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) recommends local health departments work to advance HiAP. This can be facilitated through the following federal, state, and local government [activities](#):

- Adopt a HiAP approach during the policy-making process in order to ensure that policies made outside of the health sector have positive or neutral impacts on the determinants of health.
- Encourage cross-sector collaboration that reflects community and stakeholder perspectives to support sustainable and equitable policy outcomes.
- Provide funding, training, and technical assistance for local health departments to ensure that they can assume a leadership role implementing a HiAP approach at the local level and build capacity for the LHD to provide technical assistance across local agencies to determine the best strategies for implementing HiAP locally. These investments should be made early in the process because time and funding are necessary to build the capacity to generate cross-agency collaboration before work begins on any program or project development.
- Strengthen and facilitate cross-sector partnerships through enhanced communication and collaboration between agency leadership.
- Identify and disseminate successful examples of cross-sector collaboration, from within and across sectors to support replication and scaling of effective practices.



- Establish a consistent evaluation framework, including standards, milestones, and metrics, for local health departments to identify long-term goals and strategies and to assess progress over time.

To facilitate a HiAP approach at the local level, local health departments should conduct the following activities:

- Foster and sustain leadership commitment at the decision-maker level and align efforts upstream and downstream to implement a HiAP approach.
- Develop metrics of success to use in negotiating cross-agency collaborative processes and work to translate public health data and terminology for other sectors.
- Take a leadership role to implement HiAP at the local level, including identifying the best strategies for implementing HiAP within local health department jurisdiction.
- Educate local, state, and federal policymakers about the value of HiAP.
- Engage a wide variety of partners from sectors whose work influences the social and environmental determinants to health including planning, transportation, housing, environmental protection, infrastructure development, and energy systems.
- Participate in or lead health impact assessments (HIAs) to influence non-health sector decisions that have health impacts.

Justification

Determinants of Health and Cross-Sector Influence

By incorporating health considerations into the policy formulation processes, HiAP allows agencies to fulfill their primary missions while also avoiding unintended harms and promoting healthier, more equitable communities. Research has identified seven interrelated strategies for incorporating strengthening HiAP into implementation across decisions and systems:

- (1) Developing and structuring cross-sector relationships to support coordination and collaboration among agencies whose policies influence the determinants of health.
- (2) Incorporating health into decision-making processes across sectors so that potential health impacts are evaluated during policy development.
- (3) Enhancing workforce capacity by equipping public health and partner agencies with the skills and knowledge needed to integrate health considerations into their work.
- (4) Coordinating funding and investments across sectors to support policies and programs that advance shared health and community well-being goals.
- (5) Integrating research, evaluation, and data systems to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and monitoring the impacts of policies on health outcomes.
- (6) Aligning communications and messaging across agencies to promote a shared understanding of how policy decisions influence population health.

(7) Implementing accountability structures that help ensure health considerations are consistently incorporated into policy development, implementation, and evaluation.⁵

Health outcomes are shaped not only by healthcare, but by a range of social, economic, and environmental determinants of health that affect how people live, work, and age.⁴ These determinants, which can be significantly influenced by policy decisions made outside the health sector, include factors such as income, education, transportation access, public safety, housing, and environmental exposures, many of which are governed by sectors beyond public health.⁴

Social determinants of health, including access to quality education, employment opportunities, safe neighborhoods, and transportation, are largely shaped by policies in sectors such as housing, economic development, and infrastructure planning.⁴ These decisions directly influence access to jobs, services, and community resources and often produce downstream effects on economic stability, chronic disease risk, and health inequities.⁴ For example, transportation and land use decisions (e.g., transit access, zoning patterns) can affect access to care and healthy food, as well as patterns of neighborhood separation and long-term health outcomes.⁴

Physical determinants of health, including the built and natural environment, also play a critical role in shaping population health.⁴ Decisions related to infrastructure, land use, environmental regulation, and industrial siting influence exposure to pollutants, access to green space, and vulnerability to climate-related risks, with downstream effects on respiratory health, heat-related illness, and injury risk. For instance, infrastructure siting decisions (e.g., energy- and water-intensive facilities such as large-scale data centers) often introduce significant energy, infrastructure, and resource demands that impact community health, particularly in already overburdened communities.^{6,7}

Because these determinants are often shaped outside the traditional scope of public health, their health implications are not systematically considered in policy development.⁴ A HiAP approach supports the integration of health considerations across sectors to promote more equitable, sustainable, and effective health outcomes.¹

Implementation Across Levels of Government

HiAP can be used at all levels of government and in the non-government sector. At the federal level, HiAP is reflected in cross-sector governance approaches that coordinate policy development across agencies whose decisions influence the determinants of health.⁸ Contemporary federal efforts increasingly apply “whole-of-government” strategies that integrate health, equity, environmental, and infrastructure considerations across sectors such as transportation, housing, labor, and environmental policy.⁹ Federal initiatives regarding infrastructure development have shown how adopting coordinated policy approaches can influence health outcomes by shaping the conditions in which people live and work.¹⁰

Similarly, HiAP can also be implemented at the state and local levels through a variety of policy, planning, and governance mechanisms that support participation across departments and agencies. These approaches include, but are not limited to, the adoption of ordinances or executive orders that formally define and support HiAP within a jurisdiction; the development of

agency-specific HiAP policy statements to guide internal processes and cross-sector collaboration; and the integration of health considerations into planning, permitting, and development processes.

Operationalizing HiAP in Practice

One widely used strategy for operationalizing HiAP is the institutionalization of Health Impact Assessments (HIAs). HIAs provide a structured approach for evaluating the potential health effects of policies, programs, and projects and can be incorporated into routine decision-making processes such as land use planning or infrastructure development.¹¹ In addition to HIAs, local public health departments may apply a “health lens” approach when collaborating with other agencies or reviewing draft policies, allowing health considerations to be incorporated earlier in the policy development process.

A wide variety of strategies may be appropriate depending on jurisdictional context. Local health departments can benefit from the experience of other jurisdictions that have implemented HiAP through different approaches. Examples include:

- A local policy of applying a health lens analysis at the policy formulation stage in government agencies (South Australian Health Department).¹²
- National legislation, like the “Well-being of Future Generations Act,” which establishes a governance-based framework requiring public agencies to consider health, well-being, and sustainability across policy areas (Wales).¹⁵
- State policy, like California’s HiAP initiative, which coordinates multiple agencies to integrate health and equity considerations into policy development, and Vermont’s HiAP approach, which embeds health considerations into public health and policy decision-making processes.^{13,14}

Local health departments can also apply and reframe health lens approaches to ensure that public health considerations are incorporated when non-health agencies develop new policies.¹² This approach supports the development of healthy public policy and can be supplemented by targeted Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) once a clear policy or proposal is identified.¹¹ Public health surveillance may be combined with health lens analysis and HIA to strengthen decision-making processes that shape social and physical environments.¹³ For example, a public works department trained to apply a health lens may coordinate with the local health department during policy formulation to assess potential health impacts and develop recommendations. This early engagement allows local health departments to inform and engage community stakeholders, who may then recommend a more formal HIA if concerns remain regarding potential health impacts.⁸

Institutionalization and Sustainability

For HiAP to operate sustainably, HIA must be institutionalized within governance systems rather than funded on a case-by-case basis.¹ Similar to environmental review requirements, routine health analysis should be embedded in planning and policy processes so that health implications are evaluated alongside economic, environmental, and infrastructure impacts.² Federal leadership

and coordinated funding structures can support the development of consistent HiAP implementation across jurisdictions.¹

Formalizing HiAP through Policy Mechanisms

Ordinances, executive orders, and formal resolutions are key strategies for institutionalizing HiAP within government systems. Model ordinances and implementation tools are available through national resources, such as NACCHO's HiAP Toolbox, and examples of these approaches can be found across jurisdictions.¹⁶

At the state level, executive action can establish cross-sector accountability and coordination. In October 2015, Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin issued Executive Order 07-15, recognizing that health is “an outcome of a wide range of factors, many of which lie outside the activities of the health sector and require a shared responsibility and an integrated and sustained policy response across government”.¹⁷ The order established the Vermont Health in All Policies Task Force, a cabinet-level body charged with integrating health considerations into state programs and policies across sectors including agriculture, education, energy, housing, land use and community development, natural resources, and transportation.^{14,17}

At the local level, ordinances and resolutions can formalize HiAP within governance structures and establish accountability across departments. For example, King County, Washington's Ordinance 2010-0509 defines “just and fair” provisions within its countywide strategic plan by identifying determinants of equity that are also determinants of health. The ordinance further directs the integration of these principles into county operations, including strategic planning, performance management, and budgeting processes, to reduce inequities and expand opportunities for all residents.¹⁸

These examples demonstrate how local and state governments can institutionalize HiAP through formal policy mechanisms that create accountability, support cross-sector coordination, and ensure that key public health considerations are consistently integrated into public decision-making.

Role of Local Health Departments and Funding Support

Local health departments are uniquely positioned to implement HiAP within their jurisdictions. They can draw on a range of strategies to advance HiAP as part of routine public health practice. As administrative units responsible for the health and well-being of defined populations, HiAP efforts align with the 10 Essential Public Health Services and the Operational Definition of a Local Health Department.^{19,20} Given their mission to protect public health, their established role as conveners, and their direct connections to communities, local health departments are well suited to serve as leaders in advancing HiAP at the local level. HiAP also aligns with ongoing efforts to improve population health through policy, systems, and environmental change strategies.²¹ Local health departments can determine how best to implement HiAP within their jurisdictions, including integrating HiAP into community health assessment and planning processes. In doing so, they play a critical role in ensuring that cross-sector decisions,

particularly those related to the built environment, infrastructure, and environmental conditions, account for their impacts on population health and health equity.

Funding agencies play an essential role in supporting HiAP implementation at scale by providing resources to local health departments while allowing flexibility to address local priorities and conditions. Funding agencies can support national implementation of HiAP through several key actions:

- Funding local health departments to implement HiAP at the local level.
- Providing technical assistance to support HiAP implementation and cross-sector collaboration.
- Offering professional opportunities for local health department practitioners to educate policy-makers at the local, state, and federal levels about HiAP.

Funding requirements should remain sufficiently flexible to allow local health departments to pursue HiAP in ways that reflect local context and priorities.²² Investments in strengthening health lens analysis, including the incorporation of environmental public health, health equity considerations, and emerging scientific evidence, can further support effective implementation. Technical assistance may include case studies of HiAP applications, educational materials and workforce training to improve understanding of how other sectors develop and implement policy.

The direct experience of local health department practitioners implementing HiAP provides valuable insight for other jurisdictions and strengthens the broader evidence base for cross-sector approaches to health. In addition, it supports local practitioners in their efforts to educate policymakers about the value of implementing HiAP at the local, state, and federal levels. By investing in local capacity education and dissemination, funding agencies can promote broader adoption of HiAP nationally. Ultimately, a locally driven, upstream approach to HiAP is likely to have the most enduring impact on the determinants of health, as many shaping social and physical environmental occur at the local level.

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