



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES CASE STUDY

Integrating public health and planning in Florida

Collaboration is crucial to integrating Health in All Policies (HiAP) at the state level. As one of the fastest growing counties in Florida, Polk County has faced significant land use challenges. In response to the rapid population increase, the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) began working in partnership with local health and planning departments across the state to raise awareness around the linkages between the built environment, sustainability, and health.

FDOH focused on the Smart Growth principles listed on the right in its education and capacity-building efforts with 23 Florida county health departments. In turn, those county health departments educated their local communities and policymakers about the important role of public health in community planning.

Through free training sessions targeting health and planning staff, FDOH encouraged dialogue between various state and county agencies.

For example, members of the Polk County Health Department successfully collaborated with the Polk County Planning Commission and created a “development checklist” that is used to review new development projects, changes in land use, comprehensive plans, and regional developments. The simple two-page checklist is now utilized by county health departments in other states.

Principles of Smart Growth

- » Mix land uses.
- » Take advantage of compact building design.
- » Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- » Create walkable neighborhoods.
- » Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- » Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
- » Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- » Provide a variety of transportation choices.
- » Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- » Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.

Turn for more »

By incorporating Smart Growth principles into its messaging, FDOH successfully increased awareness and application of public health principles in environmental and community planning.

As of 2010, approximately 23 of Florida's 67 county health departments had provided health-related recommendations to community planning organizations.

Other examples include:

- » Broward County Health Department worked with the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization on a long-range transportation plan that incorporates health considerations into the transit planning process.
- » Clay County Health Department contributed to a new regional development project, which resulted in installing sidewalks and parks to encourage physical activity.

The Polk County Health Department was able to forge relationships with community planners that have led to ongoing, sustainable collaborations that enhance its residents' quality of life.

In addition to the development checklist cited above, the department worked with the Polk County Planning Commission to integrate health considerations throughout the comprehensive planning process. This project has taken more than four years and is an ongoing effort at collaborative communication and policymaking.



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Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach that integrates and articulates health considerations into policy making and programming across sectors, and at all levels, to improve the health of all communities and people.

FIND OUT MORE: www.astho.org/hiap

