



#### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES CASE STUDY

## Using health impact assessment to accomplish health in all policies in Oregon

Health impact assessments (HIAs) are one promising tool that can be used to accomplish the goal of integrating health into the policy decisions of other sectors, or Health in All Policies. Through grant funding from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials and CDC, Oregon Public Health Division (OPHD) has been able to support local health departments interested in applying HIAs in their decisionmaking processes.

### Health Impact Assessment

An HIA is an evaluation tool providing information to policymakers about the possible health effects that a policy, program, or project can have on a population.

- » Globally, HIAs have been used for the last 15-20 years.
- » The United States only began to use HIAs during the last 10 years.
- » A rapid HIA can be completed in three to four months, while a more comprehensive HIA may take several years.

### Benton County HIA

Benton County, Oregon, was awarded an OPHD HIA capacity-building grant to research the health impacts and policy options associated with building permanent accessory dwelling units (ADUs), also called in-law suites.

After completing a literature review, five policy options were analyzed:

- » No policy change.
- » Restrict current rules.
- » Allow dependent ADUs.
- » Allow independent ADUs.
- » Allow independent ADUs in urban growth boundary.

The health impacts of all five policy options were considered using 18 indicators selected from the Healthy Development Measurement Tool. The Benton County Health Department worked closely with the Benton County Community Development department to conduct the HIA.

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Based on the HIA's results, the Benton County Health Department recommended allowing the construction of ADUs with some specific restrictions. The recommended restrictions are:



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- » An ADU resident must be the homeowner, a relative, or a caregiver.
- » The units cannot be offered as rentals.
- » Review the policy after adoption to identify any unpredicted impacts.
- » Cap the number of annual permits allowed to limit potential negative impacts.

The HIA enabled the Benton County Health Department to comprehensively and objectively consider options and rationales for the ADU policy.

The department completed the HIA, which will inform the Benton County Board of Commissioners' decision on ADU policy, in three months. The process of completing the HIA has greatly improved the relationships between health department staff and staff from county and city planning departments and served to reinvigorate the conversation about the ADU issue with both planners and the larger community.

For more information, please contact:

Andrea Hamberg, Program Coordinator  
Health Impact Assessment Program  
Office of Environmental Public Health  
Oregon Division of Public Health  
[andrea.hamberg@state.or.us](mailto:andrea.hamberg@state.or.us) or [hiainfo@state.or.us](mailto:hiainfo@state.or.us)  
[www.healthoregon.org/hia](http://www.healthoregon.org/hia)

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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](http://www.astho.org/hiap)

