

# **Wisconsin Health Impact Assessment Initiative**

**State Capacity Building for the  
Built Environment and  
Health Impact Assessments**

# Overview of HIA Activities

- Trained State and Local Partners on HIA Framework
- Provided technical assistance to trained partners (HIA pilot projects)
- Developed a Wisconsin-specific HIA online toolkit
- Focus groups to inform the development of a working model for HIA
- Created a WI HIA Network
- Evaluated capacity building initiatives

# Training State and Local Partners on the HIA Framework

- Contracted with Human Impact Partners to provide two, 2-day trainings
- 74 total participants
- 16% of Wisconsin's LHDs participated
- Conducted a 3 part HIA Webinar Series

Regional Distribution of Trained LHDs

# Technical Assistance: Milwaukee River Estuary Area of Concern HIA Pilot

- Goal: To understand and address perceived community concerns of the sediment remediation project
- HIA framework used to support the community to democratize decisions associated with the project
- Worked with stakeholders to gather community input and develop recommendations for the remediation project



# Technical Assistance: Marquette County Ice Age Trail HIA Pilot

- Goal: to provide recommendations to maximize positive health impacts of the Marquette County Ice Age Trail to the National Parks Service
- Worked with LHD to engage community members in the planning process
- Actively engaged the National Parks Service and the Ice Age Trail Alliance local chapter
- Conducted a literature review regarding trail development and health



# Developing a Wisconsin-specific HIA Online Toolkit

**Wisconsin Health Impact Assessment Online Toolkit**

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**HIA Organizations and Links**

**Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is** "A combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, programme or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population." [European Centre for Health Policy, WHO Regional Office for Europe. Gothenburg Consensus Paper \(1999\)](#). (exit DHS, PDF, 138 KB)

The major steps in conducting an HIA include:

Screening

- Determines the need and value of a HIA

Scoping

- Determines which health impacts to evaluate, methods for analysis, and a workplan

Assessment

- A profile of existing health conditions
- Valuation of potential health impacts
- Strategies to manage identified adverse health impacts

Reporting

- Development of the HIA report
- Communication of findings and recommendations

Monitoring

- Impacts on decision-making processes and the decision

**Spotlight**

**New** The [Introduction to Health Impact Assessment webcast](#), held May 18, 2010, was intended for public health professionals, community planners, partners, and local leaders involved in health, social and economic decision making.

[More](#) information is available.



# Challenges and Successes

- Challenges
  - Resistance due to time, resource and priority limitations of LHDs
  - Little community demand for HIA
  - Negotiating an HIA champion
- Successes
  - Outreach
  - Education
  - Implementation

# Highlighted Lessons Learned

- Successful development of an HIA program and capacity building must build off existing programs, projects and/or initiatives
- Trainings must be engaging, relevant and practical. Must be well marketed.
- Participation in HIA capacity building efforts and conducting HIA requires managerial and supervisory staff buy-in.
- It is critical to capitalize on training momentum by establishing and maintaining regular communication with emerging HIA practitioners.





## Environments that foster health and social networks

Communities should create and protect healthy environments for living, learning and working that help prevent illness, injury and toxic exposures and that foster healthy diet, physical activity and social interactions.

### Pillar Objective 8

**By 2020, implement community designs that foster safe and convenient foot, bicycle and public transportation, physical recreation, and food gardening to improve physical activity, healthy diets, and social interaction while reducing air and water pollution, carbon emissions, and urban heat retention.**

#### Why was community design singled out in this objective?

Several focus area objectives emphasized the central role the built environment plays in combating the rapidly growing epidemic of obesity and overweight (which contribute to chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and cancer), and providing health benefits (for example, to musculoskeletal and mental health). Many of the same design features and transportation concepts that encourage regular physical activity can also help reduce injury, pollution, and global warming. Urban green spaces for recreation and gardening can reduce heat wave health effects in our cities and rapid rain runoff that affects water quality. Finally, such designs can help increase daily healthy social interactions between neighbors. This is a synergistic policy approach that aligns with many plan objectives.

## Capability to evaluate the effectiveness and health impact of policies and programs

For greatest progress toward a healthier state, major policies should be analyzed before adoption to identify their likely impact on health. Health practices and systems should be guided by evidence based on evaluations of effectiveness. However, evidence of effectiveness is often lacking, and information about such evidence can be hard to find. Improved access to program evaluation and to the results of such evaluations can help improve the effectiveness of our public health system.

### Pillar Objective 9

**By 2020, create dedicated capacity in Wisconsin to perform health impact assessment of proposed major policy changes, and to compare and disseminate the effectiveness of alternative population health policies and practices.**

#### Why is this objective important?

Achieving major change with limited resources requires that the work is efficiently aligned to get results. Sometimes state and local policies and systems pull in different directions and do not all support the health objectives identified in *Healthiest Wisconsin 2020*. To the extent that conflicts can be identified and addressed during the policy-making process, progress toward a healthier state can