

Making HIAs Stick

**Inaugural Health Impact Assessment Meeting
Washington, DC**

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Venues for collaboration on HIA

1. Law/Mandate – MA transportation Reform
2. Existing cross agency/sector relationships
 - Massachusetts Department of Public Health/Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection regular interagency meetings
3. Build upon National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process

Options to support conducting HIAs

1. Work with proponents to design, support and finance projects
2. Use existing health and environmental databases to conduct the HIA (e.g. CDC environmental public health tracking data)
3. Integrate the HIA into existing processes (e.g. transportation, NEPA)

Enhancing NEPA through incorporation of health outcome data

- A review of the literature demonstrates that individuals with preexisting asthma, chronic lung disease, coronary heart disease, and heart failure who are exposed to air pollutants suffer from increased health impacts
- While risk assessment used to generate health-based standards/guidelines considers sensitive populations (e.g., the very young and old), ambient levels below the standards/guidelines can present concerns in communities with pre-existing disease burdens higher than state/national trends
- There are also a wide range of less obvious health impacts that may be missed without a systematic effort to identify and address them using the best available data
- For that reason, public health and environmental regulatory agencies must work together to enhance current protocols

Elements of an Enhanced Review

1

- Identify affected community (ies) through modeling of air quality impacts of proposed project

2

- Assess background concentrations of COCs in affected community (ies)

3

- Assess total project emissions (stack, vehicular, etc)

4

- **Assess available community health statistics/health indicators (e.g. disease outcomes, income, employment) using EPHT and other data**

5

- Determine need for mitigation based upon review of environmental and health data

6

- If mitigation efforts can address environmental health impacts, agencies can work with project proponents on community benefits to improve health (e.g. infrastructure improvements, health promotion efforts)