

## NEW PROGRAM WILL MAKE HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENTS MORE ROUTINE PART OF LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS' WORK

*Health Impact Project, National Association of County and City Health Officials Invite  
Applications for HIA Mentorship Program*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 15, 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The Health Impact Project and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) announced today a [request for applications](#) from local health departments to participate in the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Mentorship Project. Designed to support local departments interested in this approach to building healthy communities, this program will match four agencies new to HIAs with those that have experience in the field, giving them peer-to-peer assistance and technical support.

An HIA is a type of study that helps identify the often-overlooked health impacts of a decision in a field outside of health, such as building a major roadway, planning a city's growth or developing a school curriculum. HIAs can help decision makers predict unintended health risks, reduce unnecessary costs, find practical solutions and leverage opportunities to improve a community's well-being.

“With thousands of local health departments around the country, NACCHO and its membership are important partners in our efforts to advance the use of health impact assessments, and we are pleased to launch this new collaboration,” said Aaron Wernham, M.D., director of the Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts, which is supporting the program. “We have seen a critical mass of HIA activity developing through the local health department network and believe it is a promising avenue for ensuring that health is an everyday part of public decision making.”

“Peer mentorship advances best practices among local health departments,” said NACCHO Executive Director Robert M. Pestronk. “Health impact assessment is an emerging practice which exposes before adoption the impact of new policies, projects and programs on health. NACCHO is pleased to promote greater use of this important practice in local health departments.”

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A collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts.



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The HIA Mentorship Program builds upon a similar NACCHO pilot program funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which consisted of the following four mentor/mentee projects:

- City of Cincinnati Health Department (OH) -- Provided [recommendations for a comprehensive plan for neighborhoods adjacent to Interstate 75](#), a major north-south transportation corridor that bisects the city.
- Knox County Health Department (TN) -- Provided [recommendations to improve zoning code decisions](#) related to the placement and maintenance of community gardens.
- Madison County Health Department (NY) -- Provided [recommendations to the county's Coordinated Transportation Plan](#).
- San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (TX) -- Will [provide input into the implementation of the Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan](#).

The National Association of County and City Health Officials represents the nation's 2,800 local governmental health departments. These city, county, metropolitan, district and tribal departments work to protect and promote health and well-being for all people in their communities.

Applications are due September 15.

*The Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts, is a leading national initiative dedicated to promoting the use of health impact assessments in the United States. Learn more at [www.healthimpactproject.org](http://www.healthimpactproject.org).*

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