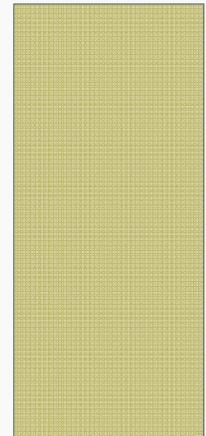


# EVALUATING THE USE OF HIAs TO FACILITATE THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS

ANNUAL NATIONAL  
HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT MEETING

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Suzanne K. Condon, Associate Commissioner  
Director, Bureau of Environmental Health  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

# OUTLINE

- I. Introduction – How HIAs facilitate the identification of issues/concerns to be addressed
- II. Grounding McGrath – Issues of greatest stakeholder interest
- III. Relationship building with transportation sector
- IV. Using transportation experience to promote HIAP approach in other sectors
- V. Summary

# I. INTRODUCTION

- Policy development and/or changes in existing policies have an impact on a variety of stakeholders
- Policy development and/or change in existing policies almost always have an economic impact
- Proposed policies are often evaluated using a myopic lens rather than a comprehensive screening of stakeholder issues/concerns
- The mandated HIA directives included in our transportation reform law have helped move the health in all policies approach in Massachusetts

# II. ISSUES IN GROUNDING MCGRATH



The five areas evaluated in the Grounding McGrath HIA were:

- Air Quality
- Noise
- Mobility and Connectivity
- Safety
- Land Use and Economic Development

# RESULTS

**Q. Did the HIA provide an opportunity for pathways and health effects / benefits to be laid out clearly in advance?**

A. Yes.

- The HIA scoping process identified the major issues and identified methods to assess impacts and benefits
- The assessment phase analyzed data to predict changes to health and recommendations for modifications to transportation plan
- The recommendations provided clear direction to mitigate negative impacts and provide opportunities to promote health

**Q. Were stakeholders satisfied with the outcomes of the HIA?**

A. Yes. Project proponents and all stakeholders felt that priority concerns were identified, vetted and addressed in a manner aimed at improving health. This project is ready to move to the next phase in transportation planning

# III. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH TRANSPORTATION SECTOR

## Interagency Working Group Established

- Members include:
  - Senior staff from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Environmental Health and Bureau of Community Health Access and Promotion
  - Senior planning staff from MassDOT
  - Senior Staff from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

## *Interagency working group, cont.*

- Monthly meetings beginning in late 2009
- Discussion about:
  - What is an HIA – do we need a MA definition?
  - Need for cross agency framing to develop common understanding
- Inventory by agencies of interagency work related to transportation
  - What worked best?
  - What hurdles were met?
- Greater clarity on what is involved in existing transportation planning process
- Identification of a transportation project that could benefit from early incorporation of HIA into decision making process

# *MDPH Challenges / rewards*

## Challenges

- 1) Gaining familiarity with extensive MA transportation planning process (e.g. understanding the difference between a “study” and a “project”)
- 2) Better estimating when actual HIA begins – many alternatives proposed but only a few will undergo thorough evaluation
- 3) Determining who from each agency as well as the municipality where HIA is based should attend the training

## Rewards

- 1) Establish a process for integrating baseline health data into a transportation project
- 2) Recognition that transportation partners not only see the importance of including health data but also demonstrating knowledge of health databases

# *MassDOT Challenges / rewards, cont.*

## Challenges

- 1) Identifying appropriate transportation initiatives for inclusion of HIA process
- 2) Incorporation of HIA at appropriate point in the transportation planning/project development process
- 3) Leveraging existing transportation data and analysis to support objectives of HIA to minimize added effort and cost

## Rewards

- 1) Broader understanding of transportation impacts and benefits
- 2) Responsiveness to community and stakeholder concerns
- 3) Opportunity to support other state goals of improved public health, improved air quality, reduced congestion, reduced greenhouse gas emissions

## IV. USING TRANSPORTATION EXPERIENCE TO PROMOTE HIAP APPROACH IN OTHER SECTORS

1. It is important to identify a project that might benefit from considering health consequences/benefits
2. Identify appropriate leader in sector of project (e.g. environmental affairs)
3. Convene planning meeting to discuss how HIA might provide useful information and get to know their stakeholder process
4. Identify stakeholder concerns to be addressed / work within the sector system to the extent possible
5. Conduct the HIA in partnership

# IV. SUMMARY

- As policies are developed and/or changed, the opportunity to keep health impacts in perspective is critical
- Use of HIAs is an important tool to promote the concept of HIAPs
- HIAs promote stakeholder involvement and the opportunity to comprehensively address potential adverse impacts of a project or policy in order to promote health benefits