

Preliminary National Study of Health Impact Assessments

Interview Protocol

Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ from Harder+Company Community Research. As HIA work continues to grow, the Health Impact Project—a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts—is interested in looking at the process and outcomes of HIAs, including the types of health and health equity determinants that can be impacted by HIAs. Harder+Company is a partner in this work and is conducting an exploratory study to learn more about HIA impacts.

You have been identified as a key stakeholder for [HIA Title] and completed a questionnaire a few weeks ago giving us some information about the process and impact of this HIA. We are interested in exploring deeper for a select number of HIAs in the built environment, including this one. We hope you will be able to tell us a bit more about your perspective on this HIA and changes that may have occurred as a result of it.

The interview will take about one hour to complete. Is now still a good time to talk?

Before beginning our conversation, I would like to go through the consent process.

+Do you have any questions for me?

Key Points on Consent

- You are invited to participate, and your participation is voluntary. You can skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering or end the interview at any time. We do encourage you to speak as openly and candidly as possible.
- With your permission, we will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will only take written notes. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any point, I can always turn off the recording. You can skip questions or stop the interview at any point.
- If you are able to under your organization's gifts and ethics rules, we would like to offer you a \$25 Amazon gift card to thank you for your time. In addition to this direct benefit, we hope that the research will support national and community-based learning. We hope to share these findings through a published manuscript.
- Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. We will store your name and contact information separately from the notes and recording from your interview.
- For the most part, we will analyze information from the interviews to find key trends across HIAs and share results as aggregate findings. However, in some cases we may prefer to share findings associated with the title of this HIA or other information that could identify the HIA. In all cases where findings from the interviews are presented or shared, we will not identify any of our respondents by name. It is possible that someone knowledgeable about your HIA or your work could be able to identify you by what you say. Are you comfortable with the information you share today being linked to the name of this HIA if needed? *[If no, are you comfortable with it being shared in aggregate form only?]*

+Do you agree to participate in this interview? *[Continue if participant orally consents. If consent is not given, thank the participant for their time.] CONFIRM HOW MUCH TIME THE PERSON HAS FOR THE INTERVIEW.*

+I am excited to hear from you, and there is a lot I want to cover in a short period of time, so forgive me for moving very quickly.

Background/history

To begin, I am going to ask a few background questions about [HIA Title].

1. I understand that the purpose of this HIA was [HIA Summary] and that your role was [X]. Does this match your understanding?
2. I understand that after this HIA, a final decision was made about [reference questionnaire responses]. Is this correct? Did the HIA happen before or after the decision?

HIA process

Next, I would like to talk about the process of conducting the HIA.

3. To what extent did decision-makers, residents, and other stakeholders understand and think about the connection between the physical environment and community health before this HIA process? Did you observe any changes in this during or after the HIA? (*Probes: What were these changes? Were there any barriers to this conversation changing?*)
4. During the HIA process, did you consider the impacts on any specific populations? Did you consider impacts on the community as a whole? (*Probes: Which specific population[s]? Are there specific ways in which these populations have been historically disadvantaged with regard to health and health equity in the community? Did you start considering one population and then shift focus to another? If so, why?*)

The following question is a placeholder and should be asked if there is any need for further clarity for the impact statement of this HIA.

5. In the online questionnaire, the HIA process was described as impacting [X, Y, and Z]. How do you know these areas were impacted? Can you describe these impacts?

HIA outcomes

We would like to learn more about the ways in which this HIA may have impacted community health or factors that influence health in the community. In particular, we are interested in how the HIA process or the related policy decisions made after the HIA was completed may have influenced health and, separately, health equity in the community. Before we begin to talk about this, I just want to frame these ideas. We are considering health using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention definition: *a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not just the absence of sickness or frailty.*

We are defining health equity as *the absence of systematic disparities in health, mental health, or factors that shape health, that are systemic and avoidable and, therefore, considered unjust or unfair. These disparities can be between population groups and the day-to-day experiences of individuals who for many different reasons—because of rules or laws, financial opportunities, or where they live—do not have the same opportunity to live as healthy a life as others.*

Note to interviewer: For Q6-9, first probe each one by asking the stem question and Part a). Then go back to whichever bucket seems to be the most relevant/interesting for this HIA and ask the remaining questions. If time allows, repeat for the second more relevant, and so on.

6. Did the HIA process or outcomes have a direct or indirect impact on the **policy environment**? By the policy environment, I am referring to the local/state political, legal, or economic systems. This may also include decision-making processes in the community and implementation of political decisions, and organizational guidelines.

If no, skip to Q7.

- a. Which elements of the policy environment were impacted by the HIA?

Note to interviewer: If multiple elements were impacted, the remaining parts of Q6 should be answered for each element.

- b. How do you know this impact occurred? *(Was it measured or monitored?)*
- c. Did the HIA process or the HIA outcomes have a larger impact on this element of the policy environment? In what ways?
- d. By what mechanism did the HIA impact this? *(Note to Interviewer: Get at information that will help us understand if the impact was direct or indirect, and what pathway this impact took place through.)*
- e. Did this impact affect all community members, a specific population, or both? *(Probe: If specific population, which population[s]?)*
- f. In what ways, if any, did the policy landscape affect the influence this HIA had on this outcome?
- g. In what ways, if any, did the other local conditions affect the influence this HIA had on this outcome?
- h. In what ways did community participation affect this outcome? *(Probes: Community organizing, active role in decision-making.)*
- i. How did this impact affect health and health equity? *(Probes: How do you know this effect occurred? If no effect on health or health equity to date, why not, e.g., is it too soon to know?)*

7. Did the HIA process or outcomes have a direct or indirect impact on the **physical environment**? The physical environment may include the natural and built environment in the community.

If no, skip to Q8.

- a. Which elements of the physical environment were impacted by the HIA?

Note to interviewer: If multiple elements were impacted, the remaining parts of Q7 should be answered for each element.

- b. How do you know this impact occurred? *(Was it measured or monitored?)*
- c. Did the HIA process or the HIA outcomes have a larger impact on this element of the physical environment? In what ways?
- d. By what mechanism did the HIA impact this? *(Note to Interviewer: Get at information that will help us understand if the impact was direct or indirect, and what pathway this impact took place through.)*
- e. Did this impact affect all community members, a specific population, or both? *(Probe: If specific population, which population[s]?)*
- f. In what ways, if any, did the policy landscape affect the influence this HIA had on this outcome?
- g. In what ways, if any, did the other local conditions affect the influence this HIA had on this outcome?
- h. In what ways did community participation affect this outcome? *(Probes: Community organizing, active role in decision-making.)*
- i. How did this impact affect health and health equity? *(Probes: How do you know this effect occurred? If no effect on health or health equity to date, why not, e.g., is it too soon to know?)*

8. Did the HIA process or outcomes have a direct or indirect impact on the **health environment**? By health environment, I am referring to disease or mortality but also access to health resources such as healthy food or quality medical care, or health behaviors such as healthy eating, smoking, or physical activity. Finally this includes health risk factors such as chronic stress and violence.

If no, skip to Q9.

- a. Which elements of the health environment were impacted by the HIA?

Note to interviewer: If multiple elements were impacted, the remaining parts of Q8 should be answered for each element.

- b. How do you know this impact occurred? *(Was it measured or monitored?)*

- c. Did the HIA process or the HIA outcomes have a larger impact on this element of the health environment? In what ways?
- d. By what mechanism did the HIA impact this? *(Note to Interviewer: Get at information that will help us understand if the impact was direct or indirect, and what pathway this impact took place through.)*
- e. Did this impact affect all community members, a specific population, or both? *(Probe: If specific population, which population[s]?)*
- f. In what ways, if any, did the policy landscape affect the influence this HIA had on this outcome?
- g. In what ways, if any, did the other local conditions affect the influence this HIA had on this outcome?
- h. In what ways did community participation affect this outcome? *(Probes: Community organizing, active role in decision-making.)*
- i. How did this impact affect health and health equity? *(Probes: How do you know this effect occurred? If no effect on health or health equity to date, why not, e.g., is it too soon to know?)*

9. Did the HIA process or outcomes have a direct or indirect impact on the **social environment**? By social environment, I am referring to changes in power dynamics in the community, including changes in social or economic power among particular groups or people, community involvement in key issues and decisions that affect residents, or institutional power. This can also include impacts on institutional racism that contributes to disparities, such as housing policies or other decisions that discriminate against specific communities.

If no, skip to Q10.

- a. Which elements of the social environment were impacted by the HIA?

Note to interviewer: If multiple elements were impacted, the remaining parts of Q9 should be answered for each element.

- b. How do you know this impact occurred? *(Was it measured or monitored?)*
- c. Did the HIA process or the HIA outcomes have a larger impact on this element of the social environment? In what ways?
- d. By what mechanism did the HIA impact this? *(Note to Interviewer: Get at information that will help us understand if the impact was direct or indirect, and what pathway this impact took place through.)*
- e. Did this impact affect all community members, a specific population, or both? *(Probe: If specific population, which population[s]?)*
- f. In what ways, if any, did the policy landscape affect the influence this HIA had on this outcome?
- g. In what ways, if any, did the other local conditions affect the influence this HIA had on this outcome?
- h. In what ways did community participation affect this outcome? *(Probes: Community organizing, active role in decision-making.)*
- i. How did this impact affect health and health equity? *(Probes: How do you know this effect occurred? If no effect on health or health equity to date, why not, e.g., is it too soon to know?)*

10. What key barriers, if any, affect how an HIA impacts health? Impacts health equity?

11. What do you see as the greatest possible opportunity for HIAs to impact health? To impact health equity? *[Probes: What types of outcomes are most likely to be influenced by an HIA? What factors make HIAs most likely to have an impact on community and individual health? On health equity?]*

12. We hope to speak with at least one other stakeholder who was involved in this HIA in order to get different perspectives about what we talked about today. While we may not be able to contact everyone you recommend, we

would really value your input on other stakeholders, perhaps with different roles from yours, who contributed to this HIA. Are there any individuals whom you would be willing to connect me to?

Those are all of my questions. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about this process?