

# Health Impact Assessments: A Decision Making Tool to Enhance Social Justice

**HIA in the United States: Bridging research and policy to  
address the determinants of health and health  
disparities**

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

# Presenter Disclosures

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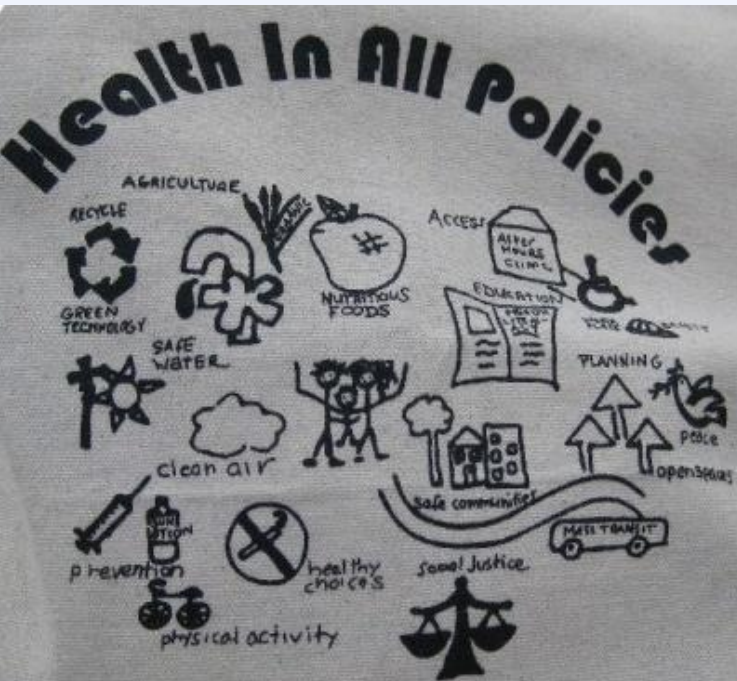
**Aaron Wernham**

**The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:**

No relationships to disclose

# “Non-health” policies: An emerging focus for public health

*"(The) toxic combination of bad policies, economics, and politics is, in large measure, responsible for the fact that a majority of people in the world do not enjoy the good health that is biologically possible."* WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health, 2009



**Health in all policies.** APHA supports requiring all new federal policies and programs to take into consideration all Impacts, both positive and negative, on the public's health.

# “Health in all policies” but...

## How to we put this into practice?

- *No common language:*
  - transportation engineers don't understand health data.
  - public health professionals don't understand the constraints and limitations of the planning process
- *Few routine/formalized requirements*
- *No routine/formalized interaction between health and other sectors*
- *No funding for new public health activities*
- *“Going out on a limb:”*

Public health is science-driven, and policy and planning are governed by many other considerations: economics, politics, technology, deadlines, etc ...

# Health Impact Assessment

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- A systematic approach for informing decision making outside the health sector.
- Facilitates collaboration with non-health policy makers.
- Uses a combination of analytic techniques.
- Public participation.
- Pragmatic approach: translates available data to make predictions, both qualitative and quantitative. Uncertainty is a fact of life in HIA.
- Focus on making practical recommendations that are feasible within the political, economic and technical constraints of the decision at hand.

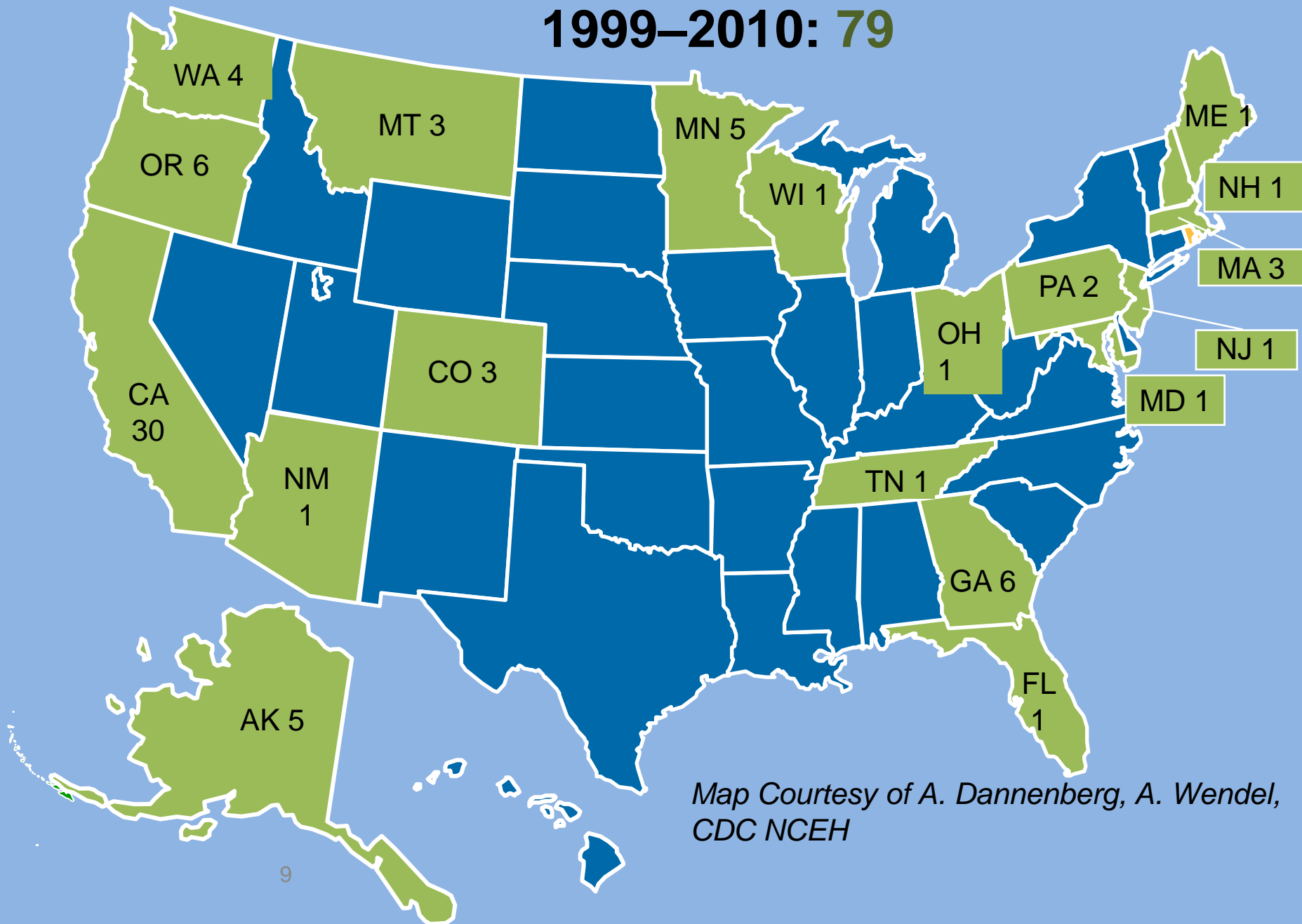
# The HIA Process

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1. Screening – is the HIA likely to add value? Is it feasible?
2. Scoping – determine the important health effects, affected populations, available evidence, etc
3. Assessment – analyze baseline conditions and likely health effects
4. Recommendations – develop health-based recs and a feasible plan for implementing them
5. Reporting – disseminate the report to the public, stakeholders, solicit input
6. Monitoring and Evaluation -- monitor results of HIA, monitor health outcomes; evaluate results of HIA

# Completed HIAs in the United States

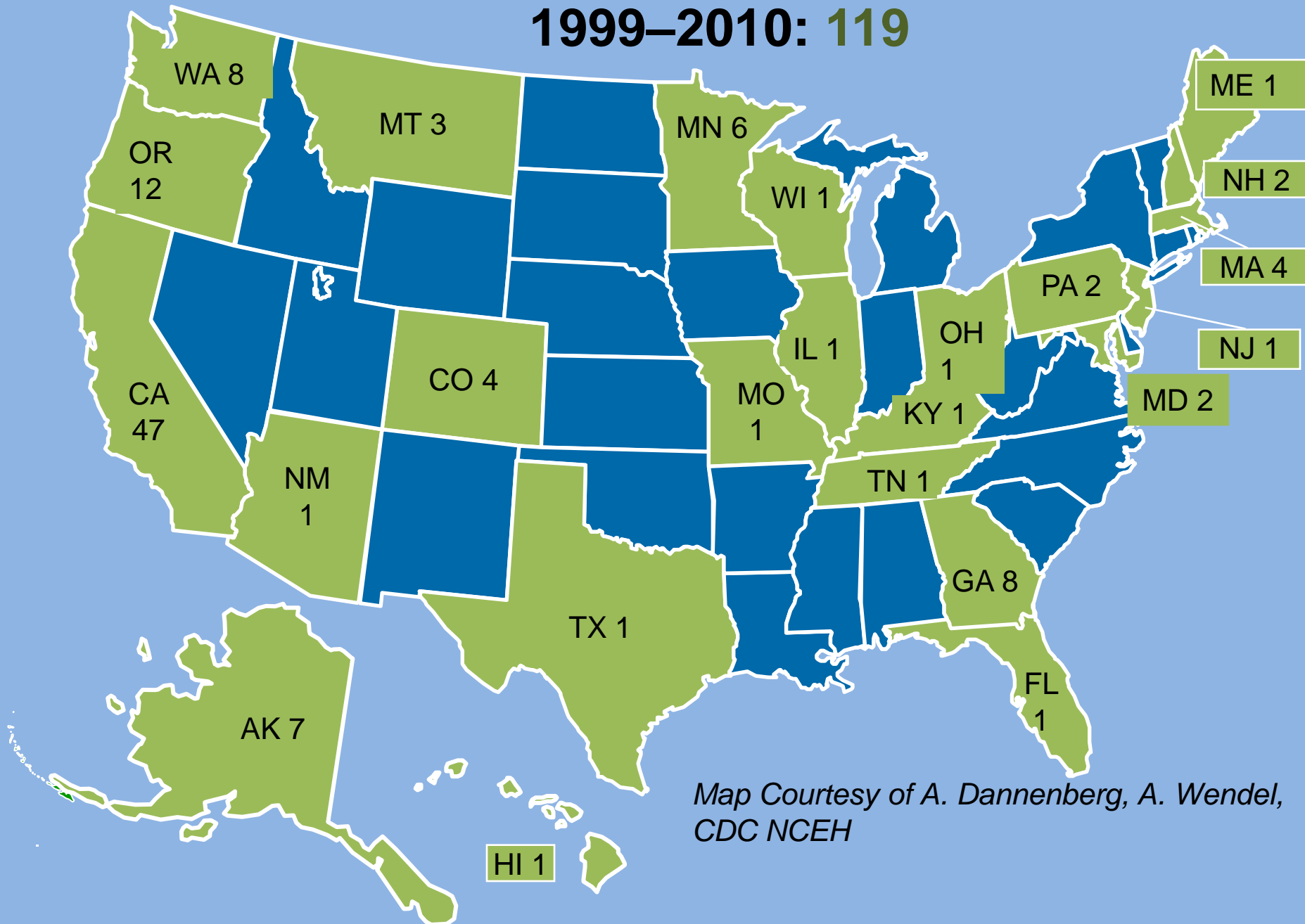
1999–2010: 79



Map Courtesy of A. Dannenberg, A. Wendel, CDC NCEH

# Completed and In Progress HIAs

## 1999–2010: 119

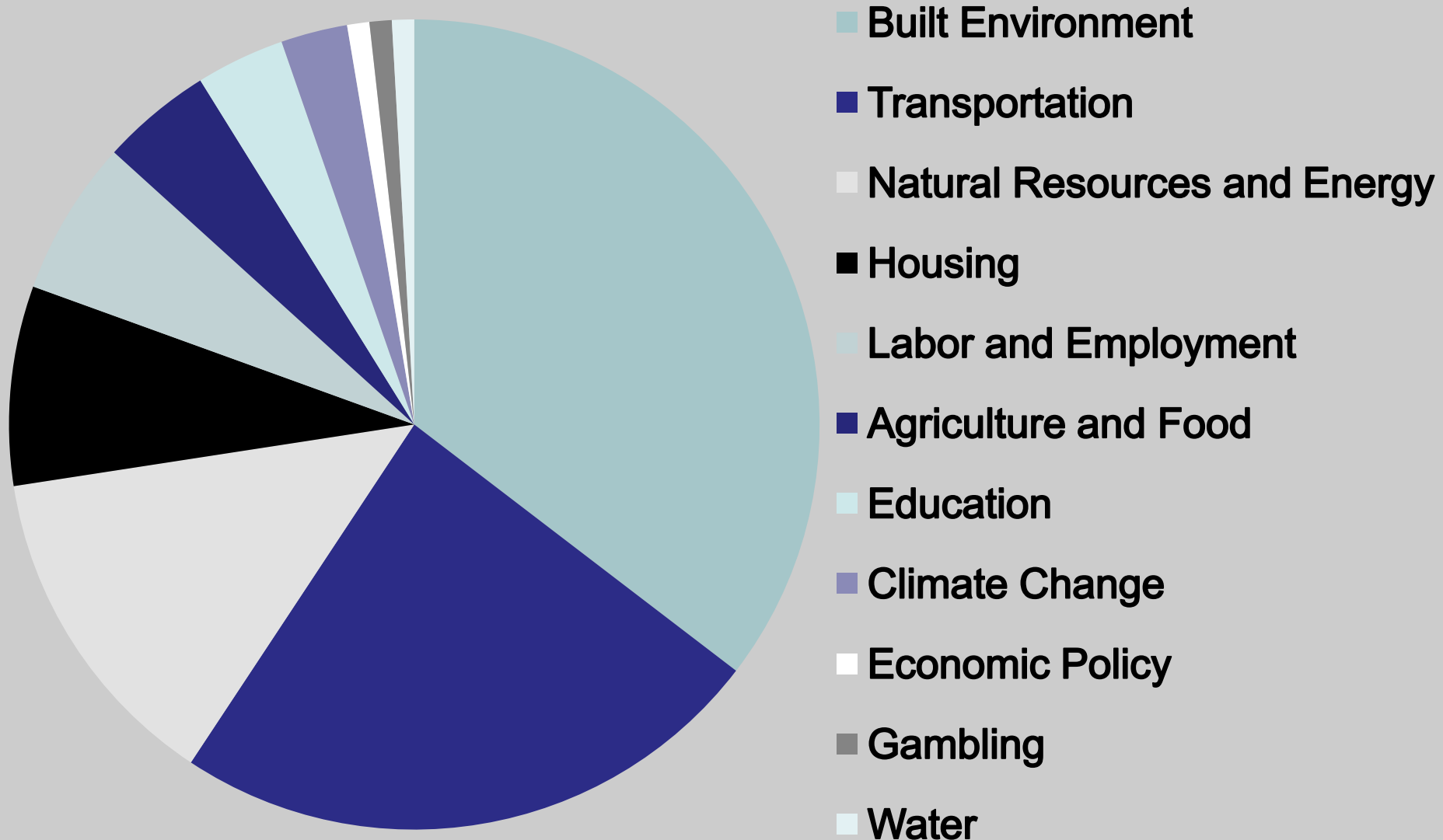


Map Courtesy of A. Dannenberg, A. Wendel,  
CDC NCEH



# HIA in the U.S.

## Sectors and topics



# HIA Practice in the U.S. History and Current status

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***Please let us know about your HIA work!***

**[http://www.healthimpactproject.org/hia\\_submit](http://www.healthimpactproject.org/hia_submit)**

# HIA Practice in the U.S.

## Growing interest: why?

- 1. Specific recommendations implemented (examples):**
  - *300 rent controlled units built to prevent displacing residents of low-income housing slated for market-rate redevelopment*
  - *New public transit line: HIA contributed to \$ millions in public & private funds to clean up brownfields, build new trail system*
  - *Central air filtration and noise mitigation measures implemented in new housing development near freeway*
  - *New air & water quality monitoring provisions for oil and gas development.*
  - *Neighborhood revitalization, comprehensive plans: health-based standards incorporated into development plans*

# HIA Practice in the U.S.

## Growing interest: what are the results?

### 2. **Systems changes**

- *Health-based standards now routinely incorporated in city's planning decisions – “we don't do too much HIA anymore”*
- *New partnerships and routine collaboration between health and other agencies*
- *Federal permitting agencies will now include health experts on future EISs for oil and gas development*
- *Industry using HIA to protect health, build better projects, and build support for their proposals*
- *Community groups informed, engaged, empowered, and building new partnerships*

# The Health Impact Project

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

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To promote and support the use of HIA as a tool to ensure that decisions in non-health sectors, whether at the local, state, tribal, or federal level, are made with health in mind.

# The Health Impact Project

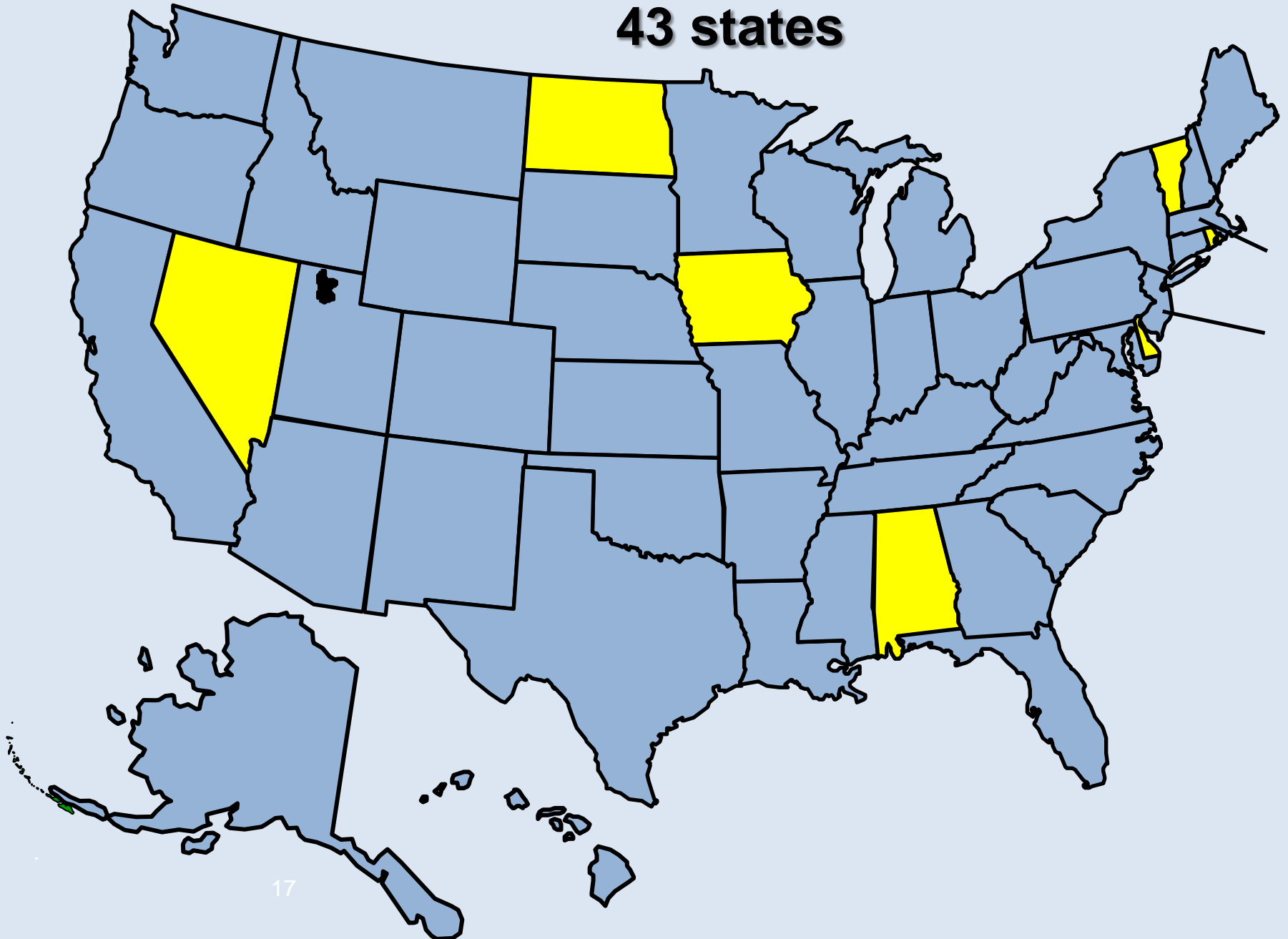
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- Web site with resources, training materials, case studies, and policy briefs
- Convening trainings, meetings, and policy-oriented discussions
- Collaborating with and supporting current centers with established expertise in the field
- Building a technical assistance network to support new HIA practitioners
- Conducting federal-level HIAs
- Research to support the field – use of HIA within existing regulatory structures; legislative best practices
- Funding a series of demonstration projects

# 221 Letters of Interest

43 states



# The Health Impact Project: Funded HIA Demonstration Grants

<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
California	<i>-Cap and trade regulations</i>
	<i>-Water conservation regulations</i>
	<i>-Light rail corridor planning</i>
Hawaii	<i>-County agricultural plan</i>
Massachusetts	<i>-Biomass power plant</i>
Kentucky	<i>-Coal “gassification” power plants</i>
Houston, Texas	<i>-Transit oriented development</i>
Atlanta, Georgia	<i>-Brownfield redevelopment</i>
	<i>-Comprehensive plan/Transportation plan</i>
New Hampshire	<i>-State budget process</i>
Chicago, IL	<i>-Utility regulation</i>
Oregon	<i>-Farm to school legislation</i>



# Grantee projects--early lessons

## Plan 2040 – Atlanta, GA

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**Grantee:** Georgia Tech, CQRGD

**Topic:** Local MPO is doing a comprehensive AND transportation plan for an 11-county region

**Notable outcomes to date:**

- transportation agency is enthusiastic about the HIA – very willing to make health a part of its planning process.

**Lessons?**

- Don't be shy! This group has been extremely pro-active in early outreach to the decision-maker, and through a lot of behind-the-scenes education and relationship-building, has developed a strong constituency for the work.

# Grantee projects – early lessons: Wilshire Corridor – Los Angeles, CA

**Grantee:** UCLA and LADPH

**Topic:** Council of Governments is planning a major light rail corridor

**Notable developments to date:**

- Transportation agency *accelerated* the EIR process, resulting in a deadline that was too early for a complete HIA

**Lessons?**

- *Adapt.* team decided to do a detailed comment letter – similar to a rapid HIA – as the first step. This establishes a framework for more detailed analysis at subsequent stages of the planning process.

# Grantee projects – early lessons:

## General

- 1. Screening** – Carefully define the decision to be addressed. To the extent possible, anticipate exactly what sorts of changes are possible within the planning, permitting, or legislative process.
- 2. Real-world policy is extremely unpredictable:**
  - Voter initiative to block cap and trade
  - Change in fuel for a proposed power plant
  - Complete Dem→Rep turnover in New Hampshire House and Senate
  - Delayed permit application for a large mine
- 3. Mentoring is indispensable** for groups new to HIA

# Discussion

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