

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

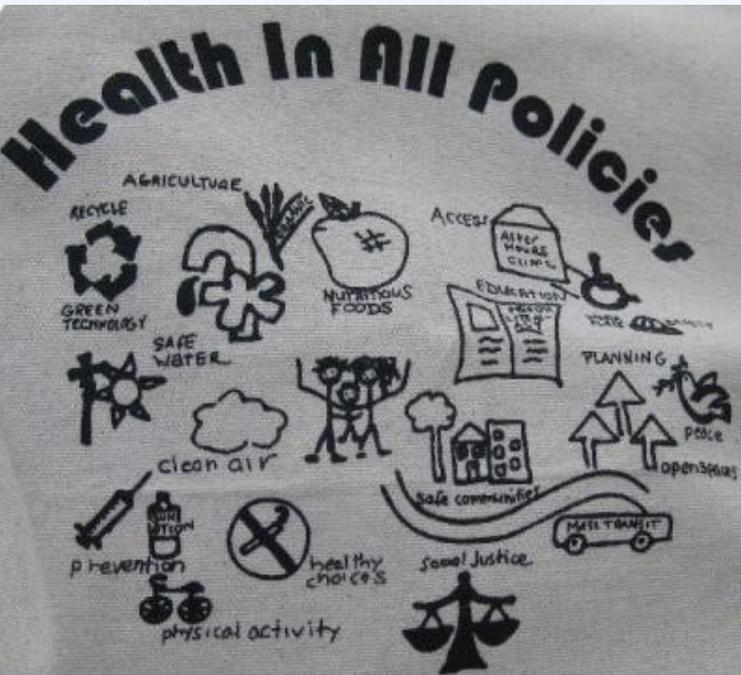
Aaron Wernham

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

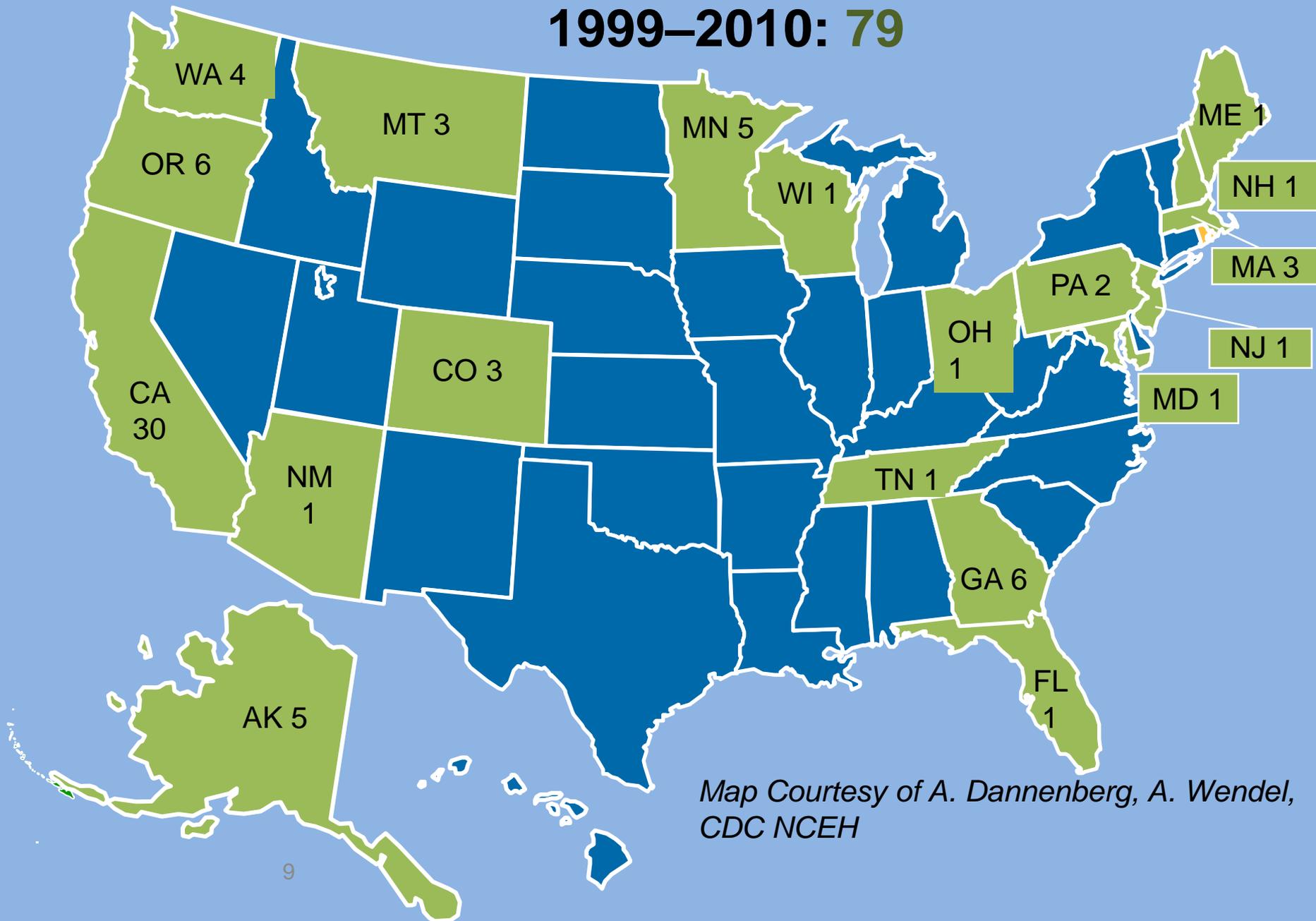
- A systematic approach for informing decision making outside the health sector.
- Facilitates collaboration with non-health policy makers.
- Uses a combination of analytic techniques.
- Public participation.
- Pragmatic approach: translates available data to make predictions, both qualitative and quantitative. 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

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

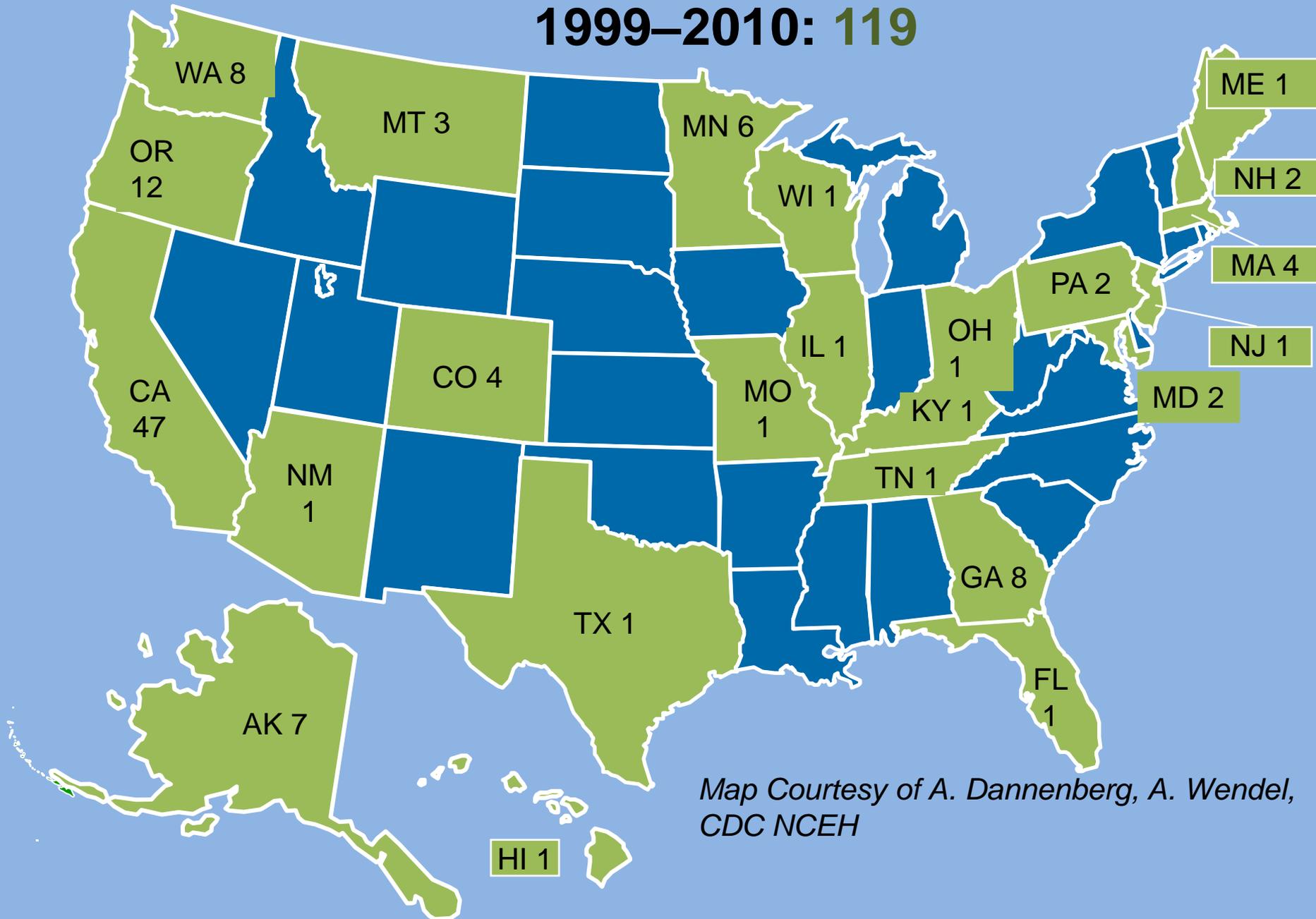
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Map Courtesy of A. Dannenberg, A. Wendel,
CDC NCEH

Completed and In Progress HIAs

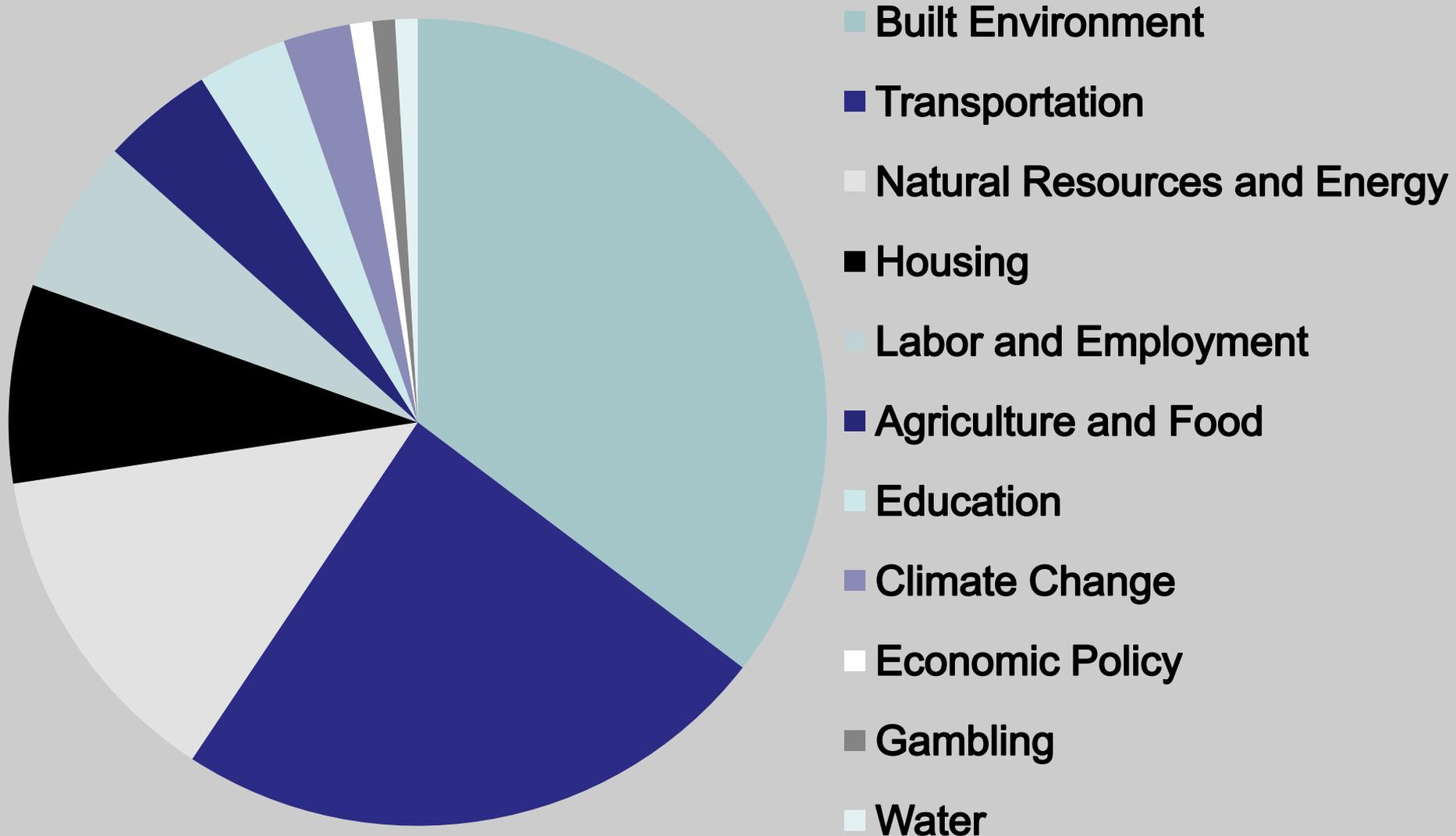
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Map Courtesy of A. Dannenberg, A. Wendel,
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HIA in the U.S.

Sectors and topics



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

Please let us know about your HIA work!

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

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.

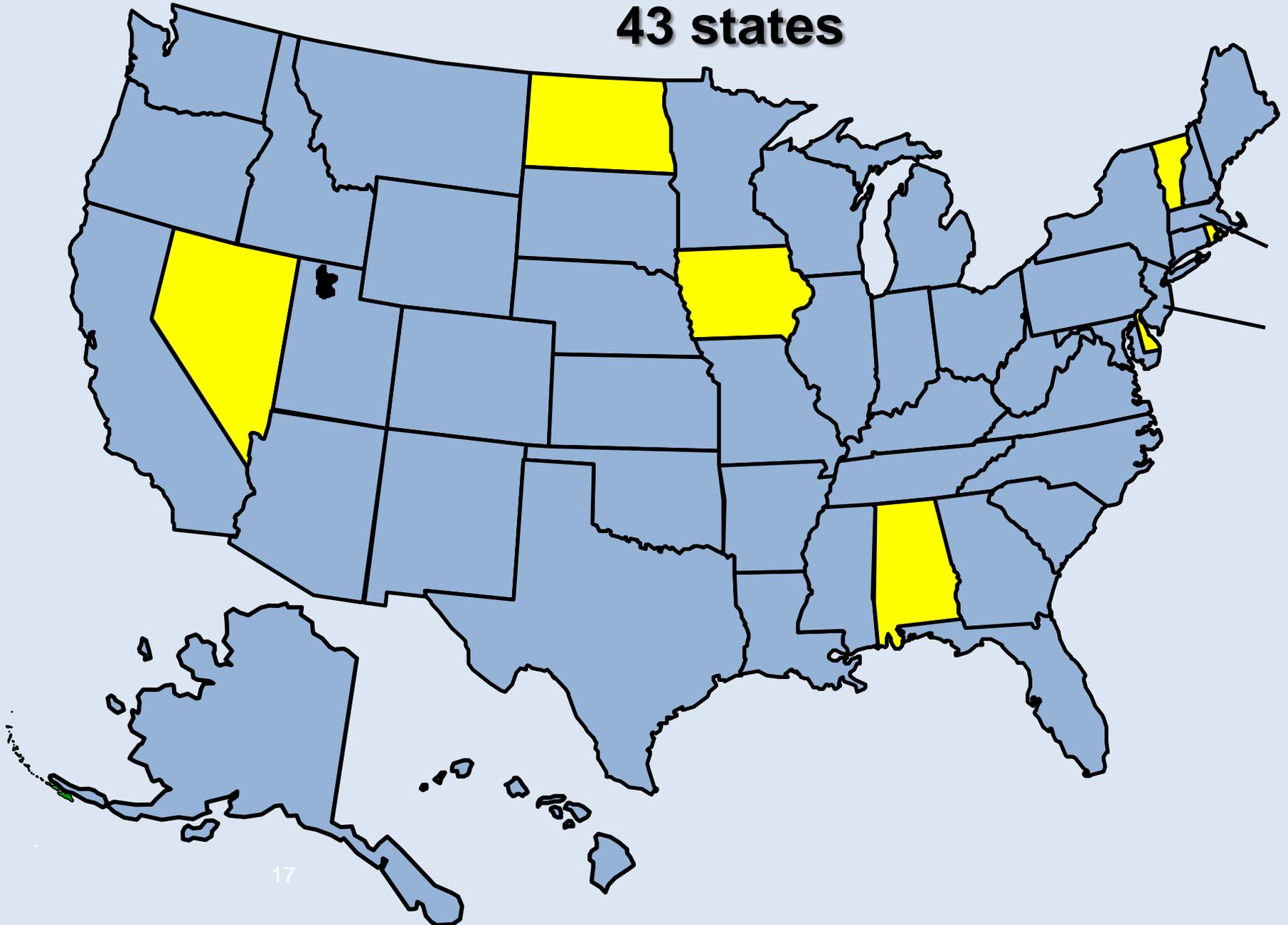
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- Web site with resources, training materials, case studies, and policy briefs
- Convening trainings, meetings, and policy-oriented discussions
- Collaborating with and supporting current centers with established expertise in the field
- Building a 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

LOCATION	TOPIC
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

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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