

**Proposed Minnesota Public Health Association Resolution:
Supporting the use of Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) to guide policymaking**

WHEREAS, many of the policies and decisions made by local, county, state, and federal government influence health directly or indirectly; and

WHEREAS, many policy decisions impacting health and well-being are made outside of the public health and health care sectors; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive approach to assess health is needed, as environmental impact assessments are well-established as a tool used to guide policy decisions, but have not included a systematic process to assess health¹; and

WHEREAS, a health impact assessment (HIA) is a tool that helps policy makers and the public understand how a proposed project, program, plan, or policy could affect the health of the people in a community²; and

WHEREAS, HIAs view health holistically, including not only physical health effects, but also the broader social, economic, and environmental influences that occur upstream; and

WHEREAS, the information provided by an HIA assists policy makers to weigh the pros and cons of their decisions and puts in place practical strategies that minimize adverse health effects and maximize potential benefits³; and

WHEREAS, HIAs incorporate a number of qualitative and quantitative methods to identify the health effects of public policy decisions and provide opportunities for community residents, public health professionals, and other stakeholders to be involved⁴; and

WHEREAS, HIAs have been widely adopted by European nations, as well as Canada and Australia, and are emerging as a policy planning tool in the United States^{5,6,7,8};

Therefore, be it resolved that the Minnesota Public Health Association:

- 1. Supports efforts to train public health professionals and others to conduct comprehensive health impact assessments.**
- 2. Encourages public health professionals to collaborate with community stakeholders to plan and implement health impact assessments.**
- 3. Urges policymakers to request health impact assessments to ensure policy and planning decisions promote, protect, and improve the health of communities; supports efforts to make HIAs routine in decision making when appropriate; and urges policymakers to follow HIA recommendations.**

4. Encourages the Minnesota State Legislature to adopt legislation that encourages and funds the use of health impact assessments to guide community development and policy decisions at all levels of government (local, county, and state).

References

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4. Quigley, R; den Broeder, L; Furu, P; Bond, A; Cave, B; Bos, R. (2006). Health Impact Assessment. *International Best Practice Principles, Special Publication Series No. 5*. Fargo, ND: International Association of Impact Assessment.
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7. Health Canada. (2004). *Canadian Handbook on Health Impact Assessment, Vol 1. The Basics*. Ottawa: Health Canada.
8. Cole BL, Fielding JE. (2007). Health impact assessment: A tool to help policy makers understand health beyond health care. *Annual Review of Public Health*. 28:17.1-17.20.