What is a Health Impact Assessment (HIA)?

- HIA is used to evaluate objectively the potential health effects of a project or policy before it is built or implemented.
- HIA provides recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and minimize adverse health outcomes.
- The HIA brings potential public health impacts and considerations to the decision-making process for plans, projects, and policies that fall outside of traditional public health arenas.
- HIAs are similar in some ways to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), which are mandated processes that focus on environmental outcomes such as air and water quality. However, unlike EIAs, HIAs can be voluntary or regulatory processes that focus on effects on community’s health both direct (asthma or obesity rates) and indirect (income loss).
- An HIA encompasses an array of qualitative and quantitative methods and tools.
- Rapid HIAs can be completed in a few days or weeks; full HIAs may require months to complete. The decision to conduct a rapid or a full HIA is determined by the available time and resources.
- An HIA may be prospective, concurrent, or retrospective.

Why are we promoting HIA?

- MDCH is working in partnership with CDC to build capacity for using HIA in developing policies and programs related to climate change and emergency preparedness.
- HIAs can promote community health, sustainable development and environmental responsibility.
- MDCH is supporting local health departments with funding and training to conduct HIAs.
- HIAs raise the profile of health and health issues and make it more likely that they’ll be considered.
- HIA is a participatory approach that helps people from multiple sectors work together and promotes equity.

HIA can assess diverse projects.

Example HIAs include projects and policies in the area of transportation, food and agriculture, forestry, energy, land use, waste management, urban renewal plans, housing, noise abatement strategies, safe routes to schools, location of landfills and climate action planning.

Steps for Conducting an HIA include:

Screening: identify projects or policies for which an HIA would be useful,

Scoping: identify which health effects to consider,

Assessing Risks and Benefits: identify which people may be affected and how they may be affected,

Developing Recommendations: suggest changes to proposals to promote positive or mitigate adverse health effects,

Reporting: present the results to decision makers, and

Evaluating: determine the affects of the HIA on the decision process.

On August 11th & 12th, Michigan Department of Community Health Division of Environmental Health held a Health Impact Assessment training at the Ralph MacMullen Center, in Roscommon, MI.
HIA Projects in Michigan

Wayne County Dept. of Public Health
HIA of Gender Pay Inequity

Ingham County Health Dept.
Tool Created to Assess Health Impacts of Development Decisions

HIA Resources

HIA Resources
Human Impact Partners
www.humanimpact.org
Health Impact Project
www.healthimpactproject.org
Centers for Disease Control
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia

MDCH’s Climate & Health Adaptation Program HIA Goals are:

- Provide HIA technical assistance.
- Complete 2 HIAs during 3-year grant period.
- Develop a Request for Application (RFA) for local health departments (LHDs).
- Fund up to 4 LHDs to complete climate-change related HIAs.

For more HIA information contact Dominic Smith at smithd82@michigan.gov