

Recommendations and Opportunities for Action: Local Health Department Health in All Policies



Overview

In February 2017, NACCHO released [Health in All Policies: Experiences from Local Health Departments](#),¹ developed from key informant interviews and focused discussions engaging with local health department (LHD) staff, community partners, and funders to learn more about challenges, opportunities, and the sustainability related to implementing Health in All Policies (HiAP) initiatives. The report explores five themes, promising strategies for health department practice, and recommendations for improving the field of HiAP at the local level. This fact sheet builds on NACCHO's 2014 fact sheet, [Local Health Department Strategies for Implementing Health in All Policies](#),² and provides an overview of the report recommendations and quotes from local health officials that capture why these promising strategies/recommendations are useful based on HiAP practitioner experiences.

Health in All Policies: A change in systems that determine how decisions are made and implemented by local, state, and federal governments to ensure that policy decisions have neutral or beneficial impacts on health determinants.³

Opportunities for Action

NACCHO developed the following five recommendations for LHDs interested in pursuing a HiAP approach at their health department.

1 Research and evaluation.

More research is needed to evaluate changes in health determinants and outcomes from HiAP initiatives using both qualitative and quantitative data. Evaluation can help to demonstrate the impact of HiAP and its ability to improve health in the short and long term.

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“You have to become a data-driven community where people are willing to share and are okay talking about real data outcomes... Being data driven has to become part of the community culture... It's a political issue, and it needs to stop being seen that way. Other communities are doing this better, and it has a huge impact. When they see data that doesn't say good things, they can use that to improve. We don't do that here.” – Local Health Official

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2 Developing the field.

Capacity building is a great need of the field. Trainings focus on why HiAP is needed and include more specific topics, such as how to engage with cross-sector partners and determine potential strategies for implementation. Case studies can be used to share information on how HiAP initiatives have been successfully implemented and how such initiatives might be tailored to different jurisdictions.

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“We have enough partner support that we're just getting it going and seeing how it goes. I think they'd be on board, but there's not enough information out there, so people don't get it. We have really committed partners, but it's a matter of educating them on what HiAP means.” – Local health official

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3 Health equity.

The achievement of health equity is a central tenet for HiAP practice. HiAP initiatives should elevate differential neighborhood conditions and unjust inequities in the distribution of health determinants and health outcomes.

[FACT SHEET]

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“[HiAP has] been a safe way for cities and counties to start talking about race and racial inequities. The health outcomes and disparities that you see are really a manifestation of racial inequities in our policies that are historic and ingrained, but alive and well. It’s a good way to talk about differential conditions and start the conversation without scaring people about race.”

– Key informant participant

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4 Expanding beyond the built environment.

Many early HiAP initiatives were focused on improving community design and built environments. Opportunities also exist across multiple policy domains to improve health. Examples of other policy domains include criminal justice, economic development, and housing.

5 Creating opportunities to share successes and challenges.

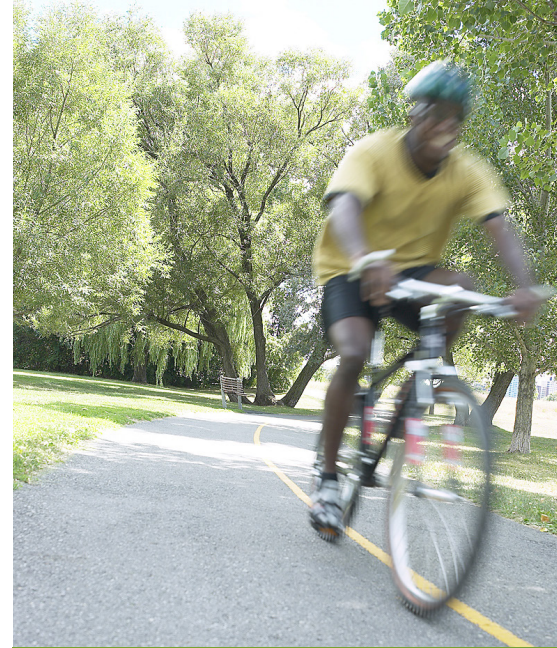
Around the country, interest in HiAP is growing. Despite the wide variety of HiAP efforts at the local level across the country, local health officials must share findings, successes, challenges, stories, and lessons learned to continue to grow the field. Experiences implementing HiAP can be shared through conferences, webinars, and group calls.

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“Traditional health department work is changing. The new generation of public health is focused on theories that work with outside organizations.” –

– Local health official

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For more information and to read NACCHO's Health in All Policies: Experiences from Local Health Departments report, visit <http://bit.ly/2iwaUAV>

For general information, please contact NACCHO's Healthy Community Design Team: healthycommdesign@naccho.org

References

1. NACCHO. (2017). *Health in All Policies: Experiences from Local Health Departments* [report]. Available at <http://bit.ly/NACCHOHiAPReport2017>
2. NACCHO. (2014). *Local Health Department Strategies for Implementing Health in All Policies*. Available at <http://bit.ly/2zUGlwr>
3. NACCHO. (2015). Statement of Policy: Health in All Policies. Available at <http://bit.ly/NACCHOHiAPPolicy>

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