

CHIA

Chronicles of Health
Impact Assessment

Improving community health through health impact assessments

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LETTER FROM THE SOCIETY OF PRACTITIONERS OF HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As health impact assessment (HIA) takes root as an established practice both in the U.S. and globally, the focus has shifted from how to do an HIA, to how to integrate it into broader health in all policies (HiAP) efforts. This is reflected in discussions at recent gatherings, including the *2019 Society of Practitioners of Health Impact Assessment (SOPHIA) Practitioner Workshop*, and *Advancing Health and Health Equity: Lessons from Around the Globe Convening*.

The SOPHIA Practitioner Workshop, held in St Paul Minnesota in April 2019, brought together nearly 54 new and experienced HIA practitioners for two days of valuable presentations and discussions on the state of the field. Presentations offered current applications of HIA including techniques for broader integration of health into decision-making that support HIA, such as ecosystem services, equity analysis tools, and results-based accountability. The plenary panel featured examples of HIA practice from the states of Georgia and Minnesota, and the country of Wales which demonstrated how individual HIAs can be leveraged to create more sustained, integrated work. There were also several sessions focused on health in all policies including: a discussion on HIA as a translational research tool which can be used as a strategy for achieving integration of health at higher levels of decision-making; evaluation strategies for HiAP; and the SOPHIA HiAP Working Group. You can read the full Workshop Report at: <https://bit.ly/2zegmNH>

Advancing Health and Health Equity: Lessons from Around the Globe Convening hosted 35 experts in HIA and HiAP for a one-day meeting in Barcelona, Spain in July 2019. Experts provided examples of work they are leading to promote the integration of health into decision-making in Australia, USA, Wales, Spain, Chile, the Philippines and Switzerland. Many of these examples included cross-sectoral and integrated strategies that are part of or support health in all policies, including: development of health notes in the USA; HiAP strategies in South Australia; development of statutory frameworks for HIA in Wales; adoption of HiAP strategies as part of public health governance in Spain; and use of global governance on air pollution and health as an entry point for health in all policies efforts. A video recording of the proceedings will be available on the SOPHIA website (www.hiasociety.org).

Having attended both these events I have come away with a renewed appreciation for the importance of viewing HIA as an important tool in the larger toolbox of HiAP strategies, and of the need to view HiAP as a governance mechanism for achieving health and equity. The articles contained in this edition offer examples of work that continue to advance both the practice of HIA and HiAP. I invite you to reflect on them, as I have, with a view towards understanding how both HIA and HiAP can be used strategically to advance efforts towards achieving health and equity.

Sincerely,

Katie Hirono
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