

Health in All Policies (HiAP) Theory of Change

May 2023

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to illustrate a theory of change for Health in All Policies (HiAP), showing the intended causal relationships between HiAP approach and outcomes and vision. It can be used to communicate high-level strategy for taking a HiAP approach, as well as serve as a foundation for HiAP evaluation frameworks and metrics. Developed using recent HiAP literature and incorporating practitioner experience and feedback, this theory of change is intended to be a living document. HiAP practitioners are invited to use and adapt it for their own purposes.

APPROACH

Health in All Policies represents a variety of strategies typically undertaken by governmental agencies to build intra-agency and cross-sector relationships and change how government operates with a goal of centering health equity in public policy and decision-making.¹ These efforts should be informed by and, ideally, involve communities experiencing health inequities.

These strategies may include:²

- Forming multi-agency task forces to center health equity
- Partnerships among agencies that achieve the goals of agencies involved
- Agreements between agencies to share data and research
- Participation in community collaboratives



This theory of change is supported by the Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts. The views expressed are those of Onside Partners and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Health Impact Project, The Pew Charitable Trusts, or the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

HiAP THEORY OF CHANGE

Short-term outcomes

Relationships among agency leaders established

Relationships among agency leaders, grassroots leaders, and community-based organizations formed

Agency leaders' knowledge of each others' operations increased

Agency leaders have awareness of interconnected nature of health inequities, distribution of SDOH, agency activities, and public policy

Agency leaders' "understanding of [and] value of HiAP" and co-benefits of collaboration increased³

Medium-term outcomes

Relationships among agencies strengthened and more visible to community

Relationships among agency leaders, grassroots leaders, and community-based organizations strengthened

Agency leaders' knowledge of interconnected nature of health inequities, distribution of SDOH, agency activities, and public policy increased

Agency leaders have shared understanding of, language for, and responsibility for eliminating health inequities

Agencies' consideration of health equity impacts of specific policies, plans, and projects (including those already adopted and/or implemented) increased⁴

Agency leaders' "commitment to advance HiAP" increased⁵

Long-term outcomes

Cross-agency collaborations that center health equity resourced and sustained

Agency leaders regularly and consistently raise health equity as a consideration

Agency leaders direct more resources to communities experiencing health inequities

Communities experiencing health inequities have increased trust in agencies

Agencies institutionalize policies, practices, and funding that support HiAP

Agency leaders routinely evaluate the extent to which HiAP practices lead to equitable outcomes

Agency leaders' "capacity and systems for engaging in and implementing HiAP across sectors" increased⁶

Vision

Government is responsive and accountable to people experiencing health inequities. Government leaders across agencies make equitable, health-promoting public policy and decisions.

ASSUMPTIONS

This theory of change...

- Is focused on jurisdiction-level outcomes, not diffusion of HiAP practice across jurisdictions
- Is focused on intended outcomes, which may have not yet been achieved in any jurisdiction
- Assumes HiAP practices vary widely. Specific outcomes achieved will be dependent on the exact approach taken
- Is focused primarily on HiAP as a practice within government

DEFINITIONS

Definitions adopted from cited sources or, where noted in end notes, adapted from cited sources.

Agency: An office or department within government that is responsible for a specific service or function (e.g., public health department, transportation department, planning department)

Agency leaders: People with decision-making power and influence in agencies

Community: A group of people with a relationship based on living in the same place. May also refer to groups of people with a relationship based on another shared identity, such as a shared ethnic identity, faith group, or lived experience⁷

Community collaborative: A partnership among agencies, grassroots leaders, and community-based organizations formed to work on community priorities

Community-based organizations (CBOs): Non-profit, non-governmental, or charitable organizations that represent communities and their needs and work to fulfill those needs. CBOs may be associated with a particular issue or population within the community⁸

Health equity: The guiding principle that all people should have access to the resources they need to reach their full health potential – such as effective medical care, quality education, safe housing, nutritious food, and clean air and water – regardless of their identity, income, or geography⁹

Health inequities: Avoidable, systematic differences in health status adversely affecting economically or socially disadvantaged groups in unfair and unjust ways¹⁰

Policy: A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual.¹¹ This includes laws, plans, processes, and program and project designs.

Root causes: Underlying reasons for inequities that are related to unequal distribution of power and resources and the systems that distribute power and resources¹²

Social determinants of health (SDOH): Nonmedical factors – such as employment, income, housing, transportation, child care, education, discrimination, and the quality of the places where people live, work, learn, and play – that influence health¹³

- ¹ Hall, R. L., & Jacobson, P. D. (2018). Examining Whether The Health-In-All-Policies Approach Promotes Health Equity. *Health Affairs (Project Hope)*, 37(3), 364–370.
- ² Rudolph, L., Caplan, J., Ben-Moshe, K., & Dillon, L. (2013). *Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments*. Washington, DC and Oakland, CA: American Public Health Association and Public Health Institute.
- ³ Gase, L. N., Schooley, T., Lee, M., Rotakhina, S., Vick, J., & Caplan, J. (2017). A Practice-Grounded Approach for Evaluating Health in All Policies Initiatives in the United States. *Journal of public health management and practice* : JPHMP, 23(4), 339–347.
- ⁴ Gase, L. N., Schooley, T., Lee, M., Rotakhina, S., Vick, J., & Caplan, J. (2017). A Practice-Grounded Approach for Evaluating Health in All Policies Initiatives in the United States. *Journal of public health management and practice* : JPHMP, 23(4), 339–347.
- ⁵ Gase, L. N., Schooley, T., Lee, M., Rotakhina, S., Vick, J., & Caplan, J. (2017). A Practice-Grounded Approach for Evaluating Health in All Policies Initiatives in the United States. *Journal of public health management and practice* : JPHMP, 23(4), 339–347.
- ⁶ Gase, L. N., Schooley, T., Lee, M., Rotakhina, S., Vick, J., & Caplan, J. (2017). A Practice-Grounded Approach for Evaluating Health in All Policies Initiatives in the United States. *Journal of public health management and practice* : JPHMP, 23(4), 339–347.
- ⁷ Adapted from Oxford Languages. (n.d.). Community. In Google English Dictionary. Retrieved March 8, 2023.
- ⁸ Carleton University, Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement. (n.d.) Glossary: Community-based organizations.
- ⁹ The Pew Charitable Trusts. (2022). Internal definition under communications review.
- ¹⁰ Adapted from Braveman P., Arkin E., Orleans T., Proctor D., and Plough A. (2017). *What Is Health Equity? And What Difference Does a Definition Make?* Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- ¹¹ Oxford Languages. (n.d.). Policy. In Google English Dictionary. Retrieved March 8, 2023.
- ¹² Adapted from National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- ¹³ Adapted from Braveman P., Arkin E., Orleans T., Proctor D., and Plough A. (2017). *What Is Health Equity? And What Difference Does a Definition Make?* Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.