

Health Impact Assessment: A Collaborative Tool for Advancing Smarter Policies and Healthier Communities

Kara Vonasek, MPH
Project Manager, Health Impact Project
The Pew Charitable Trusts

Disability and Health Partners Meeting

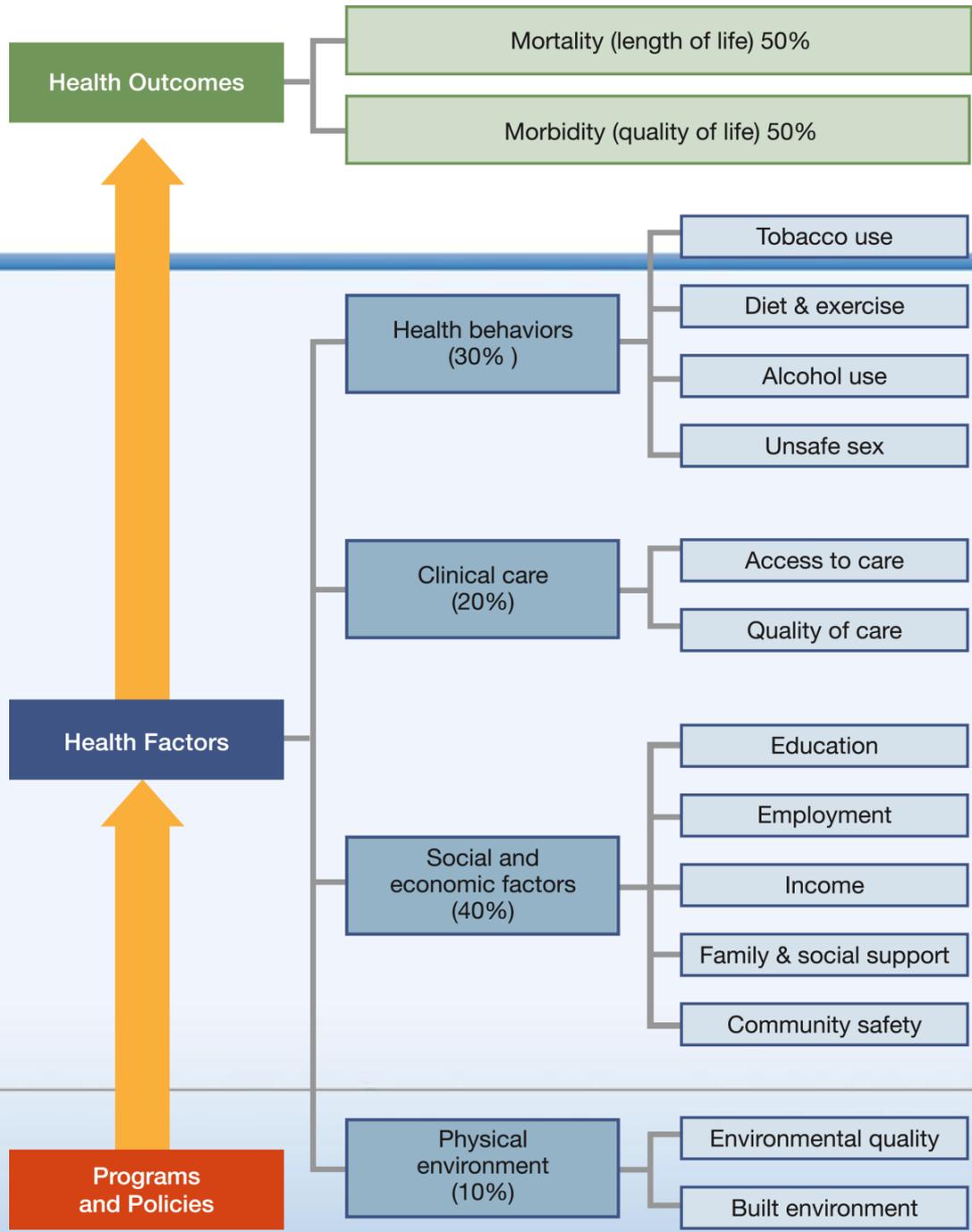
Chicago, IL

June 14-16, 2011

A collaboration between Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Outline

- Context for HIA
- Steps of HIA
- Description of the field
- Examples of HIA
- HIA: a tool for multi-sector collaboration
- Health Impact Project overview
- Lessons learned from grantees
- Institutionalization of HIA



County Health Rankings

RWJF and University of Wisconsin Madison:

www.countyhealthrankings.org/about-project/background



The Problem

Policy, program and project decisions made in sectors that do not consider health as their primary mission generally do not consider the potential effects on human health, often resulting in unintended negative consequences.

HIA Addresses Determinants of Health

How does the proposed project, plan, policy



and lead to health outcomes

Definition of HIA

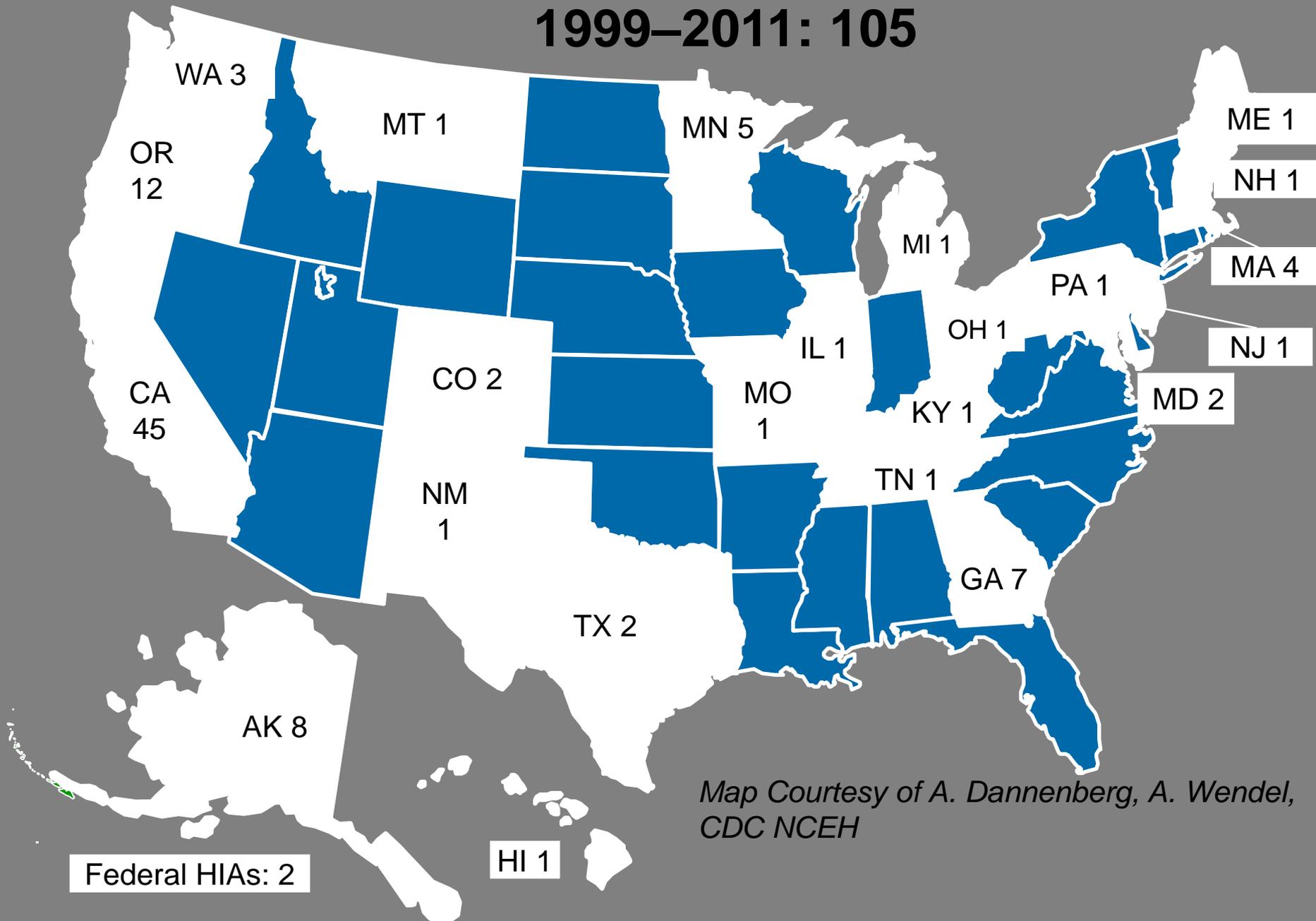
A pragmatic, six-step approach that helps translate the best available public health data into practical information that's useful to a decision maker in planning a new program, project or policy.

(Health Impact Project 2009)

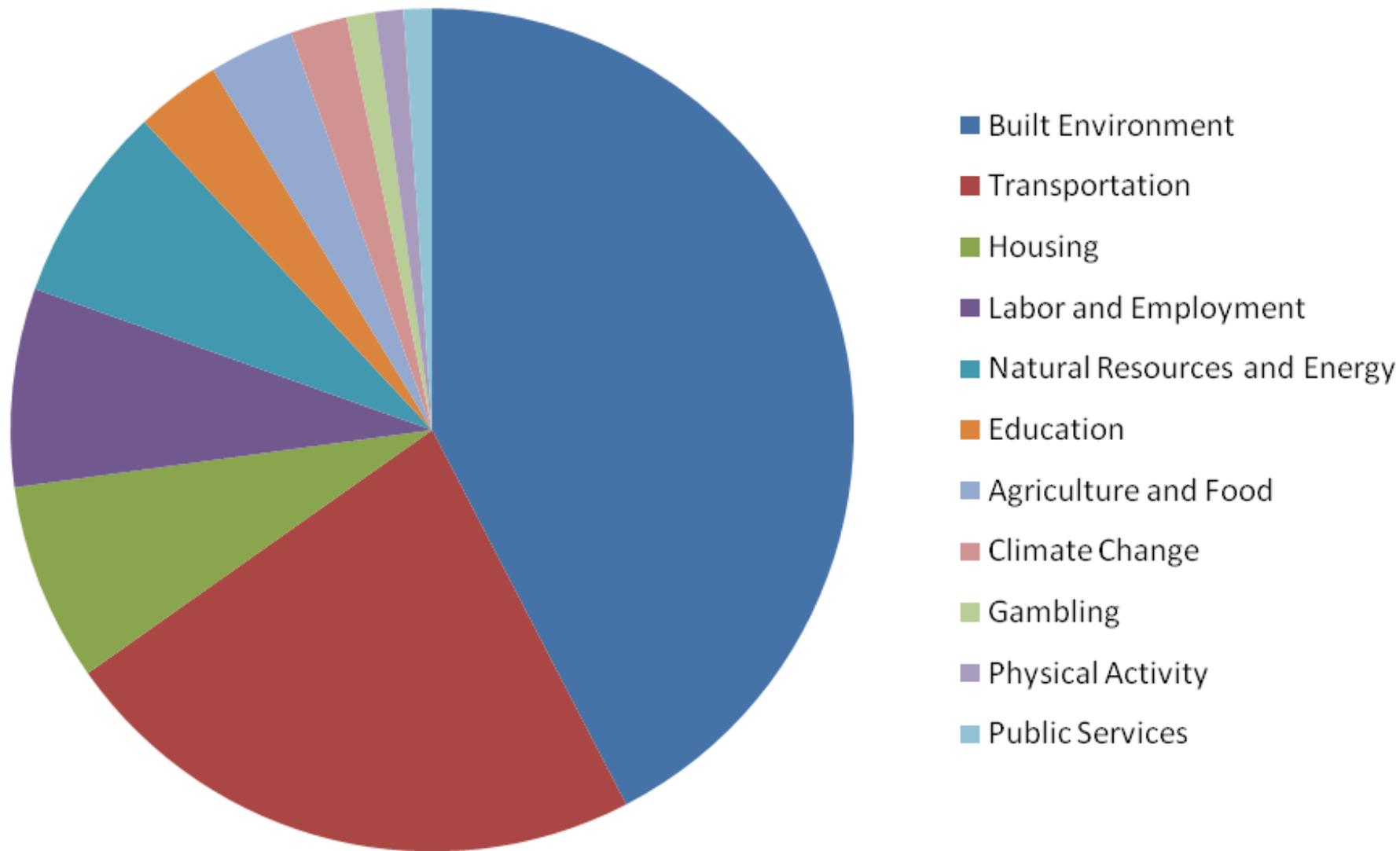
The HIA Process

- **Screening**: *Is HIA feasible and likely to add value?*
- **Scoping**: *What are the important health effects? Who are the affected populations? What is available evidence?*
- **Assessment**: *What are the baseline conditions and likely health impacts?*
- **Recommendations**: *Develop health-based recommendations and a feasible plan for implementing them*
- **Reporting**: *Disseminate the report to the public, stakeholders; solicit input*
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**: *Monitor results of HIA, monitor health outcomes; evaluates the HIA process*

Completed and In Progress HIAs 1999–2011: 105



HIA in the United States: Sectors and Topics



Who Does HIA?

- Non-profit organizations
- Community groups affected by a decision
- Local and state government agencies
- Universities and research institutions
- Industry/business community

HIA Case Studies for Healthy Communities

- Jack London Gateway Senior Housing Development
- Page Avenue Revitalization
- South Lincoln Homes

HIA Ex: Jack London Gateway Development

Authors: Human Impact Partners & SFDPH

Decision: Plan for 61 new senior housing units close to 2 freeways & Port of Oakland

Impacts: Air quality; noise; safety; retail access

Recommendations: Air quality monitoring; installation of ventilation systems; noise-insulating windows; pedestrian protection medians; traffic calming measures; and many others



Outcomes:

- Many recommendations adopted
- Additional HIA projects were funded
- Healthy Development Checklist adopted by the development committee

HIA Ex: Page Avenue Revitalization

Authors: Washington University in St. Louis

Decision: Addressed a \$45-million revitalization project in the City of Pagedale, Missouri

Impacts: Employment; access to goods & services, healthy foods, recreation; pedestrian safety; community safety; community identity; housing

Recommendations:

- Improve pedestrian infrastructure; implement orchards & gardens
- Add education & programming to physical improvements
- Prioritize spaces & programs for youth recreation
- Foster stakeholder engagement



HIA Ex: South Lincoln Homes

Authors: EnviroHealth Consulting, MITHUN firm, and Denver Housing Authority

Decision: Master plan for the South Lincoln housing redevelopment owned by the Denver Housing Authority

Impacts: Community and Supportive Services (CSS) Planning; air quality and noise; safety and security; healthy foods access; access to education and jobs

Recommendations: Pedestrian-level lighting to improve safety; low impact stormwater management techniques; noise barriers; improved bike lanes and sidewalks; and spaces for a farmers' market and community garden.



Outcomes: Recommendations incorporated in master plan; the planning department required health in RFPs for future transportation development plans in downtown Denver

HIA: Tool to Increase Multi-Sector Partnerships

What Differentiates HIA?—Emphasis on Engagement

- Brings public health professionals, community stakeholders—especially often overlooked populations—to the table with planners, developers, and decision makers to focus on practical, realistic solutions



What HIA is not . . . What HIA is

- It's not used to make the case for why a policy, program or project should be proposed.
- It's not an assessment to understand the impacts of a program or policy once it has been implemented.
- The Sweet Spot – It's proactive! Meant to inform a proposed policy, program or project currently under consideration.
- It's not a community assessments tool (i.e., MAPP, CHIP, CHA), but those are used during assessment stage of HIA.
- HIA is the framework that translates that data into well-informed policies

The Health Impact Project Overview

Goals/Objectives:

- To build the field of HIA
- Make the case for institutionalization of HIA

Project Activities:

- Funding a series of demonstration projects
- Providing technical assistance to support new HIA practitioners through key partnerships
- Neutral convener – connect people to resources in the field
- Garner lessons learned to identify potential policy levers for institutionalizing HIA

Lessons Learned from Grantee Portfolio

1. HIA can be successfully applied to a wide array of topics:
 - The implementation of **California's Cap and Trade** regulation
 - The island of **Hawaii's county agricultural plan**
 - A **smart metering pilot project** in Chicago
 - Oregon's proposed **Farm-to-School legislation**
 - **ISAIAH's light rail project** in Minnesota that was presented on yesterday
 - A major commercial **brownfield redevelopment project** near Atlanta's airport
 - The **Atlanta 2040 regional plan**
 - And even **New Hampshire's state budget process**

Lessons Learned from Grantee Portfolio

2. HIA works in the setting of real time planning and decision-making.
 - Solutions-oriented and pragmatic (can actually speed approval of a project/decision)
 - Flexible (scope can be scaled to fit available time & resources)
3. Not for EVERY decision
4. The best way to learn HIA is just to do one!

Institutionalization of HIA

- Training—learning HIA is the first step
- Doing HIA—this is most important step
- Legacy of HIA:
 - Relationships/trust is built among partners
 - Increased efficacy for carrying out HIA
 - Increased stakeholder buy-in/understanding value of HIA
 - Increases likelihood of doing another HIA in future
- Most HIAs aren't all that expensive—primarily staff time
- Takes a few champions willing to spearhead effort

Questions?

Kara Vonasek

Project Manager, Health Impact Project

The Pew Charitable Trusts

Tel. 202-540-6379

kvonasek@pewtrusts.org

