



# Health in Government

May 2017

## AN INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES

This newsletter is the culmination of several years of effort on behalf of the health department to learn about and immerse ourselves in Health in All Policies (HiAP). This term, first used in Finland in 2006 to encompass an idea that was articulated by the World Health Organization in 1978, is a very simple way of saying that all policies, at all levels of government, influence health and well-being.

Consider road commissions, which are charged with keeping our local roads maintained and safe. These commissions could not do their job properly if they had no information on car accidents and the places they most often occur. Accident information and statistics inform their decisions on road signs, traffic patterns, and more.

Every government entity—be it board, commission, or department—makes decisions that impact health and that can be *informed* by local health information, just like road commissions are. With the emerging field of HiAP, there is a name given to the collaboration that can (and should!) exist between public health and other agencies to help enhance the health of communities.

Another example of how decisions in a seemingly non-health related government entity can affect health

relates to planning and zoning. A community with no ordinances regarding liquor retail establishments will look quite different from a municipality that limits the number of liquor retail establishments to one within each 10–square mile block. The latter municipality might see less underage drinking because youth are exposed to fewer alcohol advertisements by liquor establishments.

Another planning and zoning example is how municipalities decide to zone neighborhoods. A mixed-use neighborhood that has a grocery store, houses, a school, and a park all in close proximity will have different effects on its residents' health than a residential-only neighborhood located 15 miles from the nearest grocery store and school. In the former community, residents might walk or bike more places instead of driving, which can decrease obesity and chronic disease rates and improve air quality since there are fewer cars driving.

While these examples might seem drastic and overstated, they aren't, and they are taking place in communities across the world. Embracing a HiAP approach can lead to changes that have a big impact on community health. And remember—starting small is still starting!

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

### A “Health in All Policies” Approach

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department's (BEDHD's) vision is to promote and achieve “a community where everyone has the opportunity to live a long, healthy, and active life.” We are striving toward this goal despite the increasingly lower budgets and increasingly complex problems that all governmental entities are facing.

One tool that can help us move toward this vision is a “Health in All Policies” (HiAP) approach. By increasing collaboration across government sectors, HiAP aims to ensure that “all decision-makers are informed about the health, equity, and sustainability consequences of various policy options.”

HiAP encourages efficiency by focusing on issues that are being addressed by multiple agencies. It promotes discussion of how agencies can share resources and work together to lower costs, eliminate duplication of efforts, and improve outcomes.

This publication serves to promote HiAP by providing local governments with resources, information, and ideas, with the ultimate goal of improving the health, safety, and well-being of Barry and Eaton counties.

Reference: 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.

# Local Spotlight

## Eaton County Parks and Recreation

When the Eaton County Parks and Recreation Department acquired a 432-acre parcel of land to be developed as a county park, they recognized the significant impact that it could have not just economically and recreationally, but also on the health of local communities.

Taking this into account, a steering committee was developed that includes stakeholders from diverse county groups and organizations, including the Barry-Eaton District Health Department and Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital. This steering committee will be holding a series of public meetings in order to hear directly from local residents who will be affected by and have an interest in the development of the park.

In addition to building public and private health professionals into their steering committee representation, Eaton County Parks and Recreation has also participated in a local graduate student's Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the park. HIAs are formal evaluations with a standardized framework to help tease out potential impacts on health that can occur as a result of a policy, project, or development.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION...

... about Crandell Park:  
Contact Eaton County Parks  
at (517) 627-7351 or  
[parksdept@eatoncounty.org](mailto:parksdept@eatoncounty.org).

... about the Crandell Park  
Health Impact Assessment:  
Contact Liliana Morrison at  
[lilfipps@gmail.com](mailto:lilfipps@gmail.com).

## Medical Marijuana in Your Municipality



With the passage in 2016 of the Medical Marijuana Facilities Licensing Act (PA 281 of 2016), municipalities are now in control of what happens with medical marijuana-related facilities in their jurisdiction. The act defines five types of facilities, any of which municipalities can allow or disallow.

On December 17, 2017, applications for state licenses will begin, and it is likely that many municipalities will be approached about land use and have to make a decision on which, if any, facilities to allow. These decisions are not easy ones: there is strong evidence that cannabis and cannabinoids are effective at treating or lessening the effects of certain diseases, but there are also legitimate concerns about public health and safety. Below is an example of how a municipality might proceed:

- Legislative body decides to prohibit or allow any of the facilities listed above. **If prohibiting**, it prepares and passes a resolution declaring that no facilities are allowed. **If allowing...**
- Planning commission creates advisory committee (including citizens) to meet, study and discuss issues, and draft zoning standards. Legislative body drafts a police power ordinance to allow one or more facility types.
- Planning commission holds a public meeting to share draft zoning standards and police power ordinance and gather public input.
- Planning commission and municipality refine zoning standards and police power ordinance.
- Planning commission recommends adoption of zoning amendment to legislative body.

It may be beneficial for municipalities to consider a regional approach to decision-making and connect with neighboring municipalities to learn about their efforts and potential coordination. In addition, BEDHD is able to offer technical assistance to municipalities that want to gather input from their residents on these issues—for more information, use the contact information below. Finally, Michigan State University Extension has developed a resource website for municipalities regarding the Medical Marijuana Facilities Licensing Act at <http://msue.msu.edu/mmfla>.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT ABIGAIL LYNCH, COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTION SPECIALIST, AT (517) 541-2644 OR [ALYNCH@BEDHD.ORG](mailto:ALYNCH@BEDHD.ORG)