

# 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

The articles contained in this issue highlight diverse aspects of HIA practice, including how HIAs can be used to demonstrate the interconnected nature of social, environmental, and economic effects from decisions; the role of legislators in exploring policies to support the use of HIA; and how the field can equip students to do community-engaged HIA practice. A key principle underlying the work highlighted in these articles is equity. It is well documented that health inequities are the result of social, economic and environmental disadvantages. Therefore, advancing equity involves identifying and improving those conditions that create avoidable, unfair, and unjust differences in health.

HIA has been promoted as a tool to address health equity by selecting policies, programs or projects that affect the health of the most vulnerable or disadvantaged populations; engaging community members in decisions that affect their health and well-being; increasing the transparency of evidence generation and the decision-making process; and by creating recommendations that improve health equity and reduce disparities.

HIA practitioners work to integrate equity into the HIA process by ensuring broad community participation in the HIA's planning, organizing and implementation; promoting representation of the communities most affected by the decision; making decisions through a collaborative processes; and respecting the beliefs, culture, perspectives, and histories of disadvantaged communities.

In addition to these great practices, the field has more to learn about how it can advance health equity through HIA work across the globe. The Chronicles of Health Impact Assessment provides a critical vehicle for documenting and sharing best practices. We hope the ideas and recommendations provided through this issue inspire your continuing efforts to advance health equity through your work.

Sincerely,

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