

## Making the Connection Between Health in All Policies and State Health Improvement Plans

### Background

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is an approach that encourages governmental entities to consider health and equity in their decisions to improve health outcomes, reduce disparities, and achieve optimal health for all by establishing a multidisciplinary framework that facilitates cross-sector collaboration to advance population health.<sup>1</sup> When implementing a HiAP approach to their program and policy decisions, health agencies can adopt evidence-based strategies such as developing and structuring cross-sector relationships; enhancing workforce capacity; incorporating health into decision-making processes; coordinating funding and investments; integrating research, evaluation, and data systems; implementing accountability structures; and synchronizing communications and messaging.<sup>2</sup>

### State Health Improvement Plans

Similar to the concept of [braiding and layering](#) funds to support agency initiatives, state and territorial health agencies (S/THAs) use multiple funding streams to enhance their HiAP work. ASTHO has found that much of the cross-sector work is funded through activities that support the policy objectives of the state health improvement plan (SHIP) and state health planning processes. Through these processes, state governmental partners seek to provide a framework for accountability, local action, and public engagement to advance the health of their communities. SHIP planning is a collaborative effort to identify, analyze, and address health problems in a state; assess applicable data; develop measurable health objectives and indicators; inventory statewide health assets and resources; develop and implement coordinated strategies; identify accountable entities; and cultivate state public health system “ownership” of the entire process.<sup>3</sup> SHIPs provide leadership, direction, and oversight within a state to address health improvement; strengthen the public health infrastructure; and engage system partners in contributing to planning, implementation and evaluation.<sup>4</sup> Like the seven strategies for implementing HiAP (listed in Table 1, below), SHIP planning involves cross-sector collaboration, streamlined communication, incorporating data into decision-making, integrated evaluation systems, and insertion of accountability measures.

**Table 1. Health in All Policies and State Health Improvement Plan Synergies by Strategy**

Health in All Policies	State Health Improvement Plans
Develop and structure cross-sector relationships	Involves many state, local, and community stakeholders. A S/THA can lead the process of developing, implementing, and monitoring a SHIP, but the plan should be a shared responsibility among state health system partners.

Health in All Policies	State Health Improvement Plans
Enhance workforce capacity	SHIP planning involves engaging diverse stakeholders to best understand the needs and priorities of the state. As part of this process, states often look at strengthening the medical community and care coordination workforce to improve access to services.
Incorporate health into decision-making processes	Data used to inform the SHIP should be used to provide an understanding of a state’s health status and the capacity and services of the health system. Most plans include data that describe the health of the population, including trends, prevalence of disease and disability, behavioral factors, environmental hazards, and social and economic conditions.
Coordinate funding and investments	As part of the SHIP priority setting process, states will review the current funding streams for public health and equity investments (e.g., forces of change), and better understand the value for the allocated funds. By looking at moving from volume to value, the state is helping to streamline funds applied to creating healthier communities.
Integrate research, evaluation, and data systems	SHIPs must be data-driven and evidence-based. They should incorporate data from the state’s community health assessment and include data that supports the rationale for choosing the priorities and indicators in the plan.
Implement accountability structures	SHIP planning involves convening diverse stakeholders to recommend key priority areas that the SHIP should address and allows for more transparency to improve community engagement and accountability. SHIPs are a mechanism for public health collaboration, organizational accountability, and continuous health improvement.
Synchronize communications and messaging	To ensure buy-in and support from leaders and stakeholders, build momentum for implementation, and utilize broad expertise related to the selected SHIP priorities, it is important to seek input and communicate progress throughout the SHIP planning and implementation process. This outreach can be targeted after selecting priorities, after the final draft has been completed internally, or along other milestones within the SHIP process. When exploring how to best synchronize communication, S/THA staff should consider the SHIP’s audience, the best method of communication, the best way to collect and analyze data, and partner dissemination plans.

## State Examples

### Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services policy-systems change work is done under its SHIP team. This allows them to utilize the HiAP strategy of coordinating funding and investments to work with other state partners that have more flexibility in their funds. Wisconsin's collaboration also aligns with the [third implementation phase of HiAP](#) (i.e., the engaging phase) and allows them to leverage additional funds for the work and extra staff support.

Through work with community organizations, state and local agencies, and advisory bodies, including the Wisconsin Governor's Health Equity Council, state health agency staff developed and incorporated recommendations into strategies outlined in the SHIP. The state's [2023-2027 SHIP](#) includes foundational shifts related to institutional and systemic fairness, representation and access to decision-making, and community-centered resources and services.

In the SHIP, state stakeholders commit to addressing the role of power and "structure-isms" (e.g., racism, classism, sexism, ableism, ageism, etc.) and recognize the importance of having community voices at the table. These actions fit within the HiAP framework and demonstrate the [HiAP value areas](#) of social and racial justice and equity. The state team is centering the need to address [structural racism](#) and push for systems change to ensure communities that need them most are not left out. The strategy for each priority area and its respective system under the SHIP focuses on funding and resource allocation equity, shifting public discourse and narratives, and engaging grassroots and community voices in decision-making spaces.

### Tennessee

Tennessee's current health plan has also been a vehicle for leveraging partnerships and data to align with HiAP strategies, including developing and structuring cross-sector relationships and enhancing workforce capacity. The [Tennessee State Health Plan](#) creates opportunities for external partners to align with the mission and vision of the Tennessee Department of Health by collaborating with state-level partners, including other state agencies, nonprofits, safety-net providers, faith-based institutions, healthcare facilities and providers, and associations. One of Tennessee's key partners in developing metrics and recommendations for the SHIP is the [Tennessee Livability Collaborative](#), a working group of over 20 state agencies seeking to improve Tennesseans' prosperity, quality of life, and health through policy, funding, and programming collaboration.

To create informed and actionable recommendations, Tennessee has incorporated high-quality data into its SHIP process as shown in a [companion report detailing the state of health in Tennessee](#). This report, in conjunction with the SHIP, seeks to inform state leadership and key decision-makers on Tennessee's health status and provide recommendations for health improvement. Since a SHIP must be data-driven and evidence-based, Tennessee's work demonstrates seamless synergy with the second HiAP strategy.

## Conclusion

Much of a S/THA's partnership development and cross-sector work is funded through activities that support the policy objectives of a SHIP or similar state health planning process. The seven strategies for

HiAP directly relate to the actions involved in SHIP planning, as both are collaborative by nature and seek to improve health and equity. Some states have capitalized on this planning process to advance cross-sector work, with a strong focus on achieving health and racial equity, synchronizing communication, and incorporating health data into their decision-making processes. When S/THAs are looking to advance or sustain their HiAP working groups and task forces, it may be useful to consider connecting with the SHIP planning process.

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<sup>1</sup> ASTHO. “The Value of Health in All Policies.” Available at <https://www.astho.org/globalassets/report/the-value-of-health-in-all-policies.pdf>. Accessed 4-10-2023.

<sup>2</sup> NACCHO. “Local Health Department Strategies for Implementing Health in All Policies.” Available at [Local Health Department Strategies for Implementing Health in All Policies \(naccho.org\)](https://www.naccho.org/Local-Health-Department-Strategies-for-Implementing-Health-in-All-Policies). Accessed 4-10-2023.

<sup>3</sup> Public Health Accreditation Board. “Standards & Measures for Initial Accreditation Version 2022.” Available at <https://phaboard.org/wp-content/uploads/-Measures-Initial-Accreditation-Version-2022.pdf>. Accessed 4-10-2023.

<sup>4</sup> ASTHO. “Developing a State Health Improvement Plan: Guidance and Resources.” Available at <https://www.astho.org/globalassets/pdf/accreditation/developing-a-state-health-improvement-plan-guidance-and-resources.pdf>. Accessed 4-10-2023.