Baldwin Hills Community Standards District
Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Meeting
Julian Dixon Library, Culver City
April 27, 2017

Pros and Cons of Health Impact Assessment

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Health impact assessment (HIA) aims to:

- Provide a focused mechanism for bringing attention to these upstream determinants of health as they are affected by public policy decisions
- Suggest alternatives to maximize the potential benefits and minimize potential harm, especially when public health considerations are not already a major consideration.

When is an HIA worthwhile?

1. **Feasibility**
   - Available information (affected population, footprint of alternatives, distribution of effects)
   - Time
   - Organization resources
   - Partners
2. **Cost** of conducting the HIA
3. **Value** (Is an HIA needed? Does it have the potential to change decisions?)

Reasons not to conduct an HIA

1. Decision-makers & stakeholders already understand the potential health consequences of the proposed project;
2. The decision to approve the policy is already a foregone conclusion. The HIA will not make a difference;
3. The decision is imminent with insufficient time for sound, credible analysis;
4. Limited staff resources could be more effectively spent on more directly acting on other more pressing public health issues;
5. Available evidence does not suggest any significant impacts. Unlikely impacts may have been suggested but linkages are based on assumptions and conjecture;
6. A proposed policy/project not specified or clearly defined;
7. Stakeholders want an HIA to report on health problems in their community (better addressed by epidemiological studies or community health surveys).

Bottom-line: Making a difference

1. We assume that more information will influence decisions, but does it?
2. Information on public health effects may be considered extraneous by decision-makers in other sectors.
3. We may appear to be biased, just another advocacy group.
4. HIA is based on scientific/technical information, but this might not be the kind of information that most influences decision-makers