



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 15, 2012

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***Coalition to Conduct First Health Impact Assessment in Delaware***

*Collaborative effort will help decision makers and the public better understand the complete impacts of choices and actions*

**Delaware City** – Delaware Greenways and the Environment and Policy Committee of Delaware’s Coalition for Healthy Eating and Active Living (DE HEAL), in partnership with the Division of Public Health and other agencies, will be conducting the first health impact assessment (HIA) in Delaware. This is ground-breaking work, with the potential to change the way in which land use and transportation planning decisions are made in Delaware. HIAs identify the health-related impacts of decisions in non-health sectors and help decision makers and the public to understand the full consequences of particular policies, plans, and projects.

[Delaware Greenways](http://delawaregreenways.org) was one of three awardees across the country to receive a grant from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) to conduct an HIA and build capacity for HIA in state health agencies. “Delaware’s broad coalition of public health advocates coming from diverse organizations, including the state health agency and nonprofits, to work on public health and health impact assessment is one of the strengths of the project,” said Nancy Goff, ASTHO Director of Environmental Health. [DE HEAL](http://deheal.org) brings the resources and commitment of more than 70 organizations and over 200 individual members to work toward transforming the culture of Delaware to make healthy eating and active living a priority. The Coalition’s Environment and Policy Committee, co-chaired by Andrea Trabelsi (Delaware Greenways) and Connie Holland (Office of State Planning Coordination) includes representatives from the Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration, Nemours Health and Prevention Services, Department of Transportation, Delaware State Housing Authority, WILMAPCO, and the American Institute of Architects—DE Chapter. Over the last few years, the Committee and its individual partners have been instrumental in reaching key community leaders and decision-makers at all levels, to share research on the connections between the built environment and public health,

promote the importance of healthy and active communities, and help communities enable people to make healthier choices.

In May 2010, Governor Jack Markell signed Executive Order 19, creating the Council on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. The Council is charged "to advise the Governor and Executive Branch state agencies on the development and coordination of strategies, policies, programs and other actions statewide to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent chronic and lifestyle-related disease." In January 2012, the Council released its [first recommendations](#), which included broad strategies and a comprehensive approach to achieving better public health outcomes. The Council's report recommended health impact assessment as a strategy for achieving the overarching goal of including health in all policies. HIA can be used for increasing awareness, building consensus, informing decisions, and ultimately improving Delaware's environments, policies, and systems to better enable people to live a healthy lifestyle.

"Only ten percent of health problems are actually directly related to an individual's health care," said Dr. Karyl Rattay, DPH director. "The other ninety percent are related to other determinants of health, including environment, housing, employment, poverty, education and more. Every day, policy makers have opportunities to make choices that—if they took health into account—could help stem the growth of pressing health problems like obesity, injury, asthma and diabetes that have such a huge impact on our nation's health care costs and on people's quality of life." Delaware is one of thirteen states in which an HIA has not yet been conducted, according to the records of self-reported projects at the Health Impact Project.

Delaware's first HIA will analyze plans for the Fort DuPont complex near Delaware City. The HIA Advisory Team had its first meeting on November 1, 2012, to shape its work plan and kick off the HIA. The assessment is expected to be completed by April 2013. Over the course of the assessment, the team will examine how different master plan alternatives are likely to impact health through pathways such as transportation equity, accessibility to neighborhood resources, and exposure to flooding and pollution. The process will focus on engaging stakeholders and sharing the assessment findings with the public and decision makers.

### **About Delaware Greenways**

Delaware Greenways is a statewide non-profit organization committed to the preservation and enhancement of Delaware's natural, scenic, historical, cultural and recreational resources.

[www.delawaregreenways.org](http://www.delawaregreenways.org)

**About the Division of Public Health (DPH)**

As a division of Delaware Health and Social Services, DPH's vision is healthy people in healthy communities. Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.

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