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MEETING DATE: April 12, 2012

SUBJECT: Health Impact Assessments

AGENDA NUMBER OR TOPIC: Briefing on the Health Assessment & Evaluation Unit

FOR: x AGAINST: _____ THE ABOVE AGENDA ITEM

NAME: Dr. Tia Henderson

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IF YOU WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD IN PERSON:

1. Please complete this form and submit to the Board Clerk.
2. Public comment on non-agenda items is at the beginning of the board meeting, immediately after the consent agenda vote. Public comment on current agenda items, occurs at the end of the presentation of that item. Submittal of this form at the beginning of the meeting is appreciated.
3. Individuals making public comment will be called up in the order these forms are received. The Chair may call on Invited Guests or Elected Officials to speak first.
4. When your name is called, come forward & be seated at the Presenter's table.
5. When it is your turn, start by stating your name for the record. Make sure to speak clearly into the microphones. All meetings are recorded.
6. Public comment is limited to **3 minutes** per person, but the Chair has the authority to shorten time, based on the number of folks testifying.
7. If you wish to present written documentation with your oral comments, please bring 7 copies and submit to the Board Clerk, who will distribute them to the Commissioners. Your testimony will be kept permanently.

IF YOU WISH TO SUBMIT WRITTEN INSTEAD OF ORAL COMMENTS TO THE BOARD:

1. Please complete this form along with your written testimony and return to the Board Clerk at the meeting, or submit by e-mail at: lynda.grow@multco.us
2. Written testimony will be entered into the official record.

Board of Multnomah County Commissioners Meeting, Thursday, April 12
9:30 a.m. Multnomah Building - 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Board Room 100 - off the lobby.

Good morning Commissioners,

My name is Dr. Tia Henderson, I am the Research Manager at Upstream Public Health, a statewide non-profit focused on improving the health of Oregonians through sound policy. I am here to voice my support for Health Impact Assessments at the city, county, region and state level in Oregon. We very much support the use of Health Impact Assessments as a way to include health in public decisions.

- HIA practice is increasingly recommended by national respected leaders including the National Research Council and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a means to consider health impacts of proposals such as policies and plans.
- HIAs assist decision makers through systematically and objectively characterizing health consequences of a proposal that might not otherwise be considered and providing recommendations on how to best minimize negative health outcomes and maximize health benefits.
- For example, an HIA on a land use plan, a housing development, or a school siting decision can help identify methods to ensure adults and children have safe access to active transportation routes, which might not otherwise be considered. This is important when 16% of adults in Multnomah County are considered physically inactive based on the 2012 County Rankings and physical activity can help reduce risks of a host of chronic illness such as diabetes.
- Most HIAs are collaborative and multidisciplinary. HIAs that engage decision makers and affected communities are one of the best tools we have to support equity – because the HIA can identify and address social, environmental and economic factors that contribute to health disparities. HIA practice can also forge cross-sector relationships and improve understanding of different concerns of a specific decision.
- I have managed two HIAs - one on a state policy and another on a federal rule making process. In both situations, we entered the analysis not knowing what the results would be and found innovative ways to improve public health as a result. For example, in Oregon we learned that when schools purchase local foods as a result of House Bill 2800, they help students develop healthy eating behaviors while also helping maintain agriculture-related jobs in the state.

I urge you to support efforts of the County and County partners to conduct HIAs, which can fit into existing forms of planning and evaluation of upcoming decisions. In order to maintain objectivity and transparency, I also recommend that decisions to conduct an HIA be reviewed by health professionals with expertise and experience in HIA practice. This review can ensure HIA decisions do not become politicized. Thank you for your time.

Dr. Tia Henderson, tia@upstreampublichealth.org, 503-284-6390, Upstream Public Health