

# HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES BEST AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES



## SUMMARY

The following Health in All Policies (HiAP) best and innovative practices is a summary of information that has been collected from a variety of State and National resources.

### THE GOAL OF THIS DOCUMENT IS

1. To identify best practices and innovative approaches that are;
  - A. currently occurring and are being implemented
  - B. find inspirational approaches that could be included in future planning

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2. This document is meant to be a guide and is NOT intended to represent all the agencies practices, policies and programs related to health in all policies

### WHY THIS MATTERS

Energy is essential to health and wellbeing; it is necessary for cooking, heat, transport, medical care, and more. Energy efficiency programs such as weatherization of homes and the use of renewable energy are beneficial to the health of all people and their environment.

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### MISSION

To serve all citizens of Vermont through public advocacy, planning, programs, and other actions that meet the public's need for least cost, environmentally sound, efficient, reliable, secure, sustainable, and safe energy, telecommunications, and regulated utility systems in the state for the short and long term.

### STRATEGIC GOALS

- 1 Promoting the interest of the general public in the provision of the state's regulated public services- -electricity, natural gas, telephone, cable television, and to a limited degree water and wastewater
- 2 Ensuring that the state's telecommunications infrastructure can support a diversified set of services that address the current and potential needs of the state's residents and business entities
- 3 Protecting the public health and safety and ensuring that safety regulations established by federal and state government for nuclear facilities, natural gas, and certain types of propane installations are met

### STATUS ICON KEY



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## BUDGET

The Department's operations (which encompass Public Advocacy, Engineering, Telecommunications & Connectivity, Finance & Economics, and Consumer Affairs & Public Information), are supported by a tax on the sale of electricity by Vermont's distribution utilities. The Department also houses the Clean Energy Development Fund, which does not have a dedicated funding source at this time. Opportunities exist within the current scope and scale of the Department's budget to promote Vermonters' health, including:

- The Clean Energy Development Fund has budgeted its remaining funds to support advanced wood heating systems for residential, commercial, and nonprofit institutional entities. It also offers credit enhancements for the Department's Heat Saver Loan Program.
- The Department's Heat Saver Loan Program helps Vermonters to increase the efficiency of their homes and heating systems, including health and safety measures.
- The Department oversees the budgets and performance of the state's energy efficiency utilities, which are working to help weatherize existing homes and businesses, facilitate the deployment of highly efficient new structures, and decrease the use of electricity and fossil fuels.
- The Department will disburse funding in FY18 to assist regions and municipalities with implementation of Act 174 enhanced energy planning, wherein regions and municipalities assess their energy use, set goals for reducing energy usage and increasing the share of that energy provided by renewables, determine pathways to meet their goals, and map potential and unsuitable areas for clean and renewable energy projects.

Additional opportunities to promote health could be realized through the following, if additional funding was to become available:

- The Clean Energy Development Fund could again offer grants, loans, and incentives to support additional renewable energy systems, including additional support to the popular wood stove changeout program, which helped upgrade older wood stoves and boilers.
- The Department could work with the Department of Health to develop and implement health impact assessments for energy projects.

## POLICY

One of the ways the Department advocates for these policies is by participating as a party in proceedings before the Vermont Public Utility Commission regarding energy project proposals. As a party, the Department analyzes, recommends, and litigates in support of projects that reflect the state of the science regarding the 30 VSA Section 248 criteria that fall within its jurisdiction. Issues the Department examines in this context include safe blasting procedures, noise levels, and electromagnetic fields.

The Department also recommends the Commission condition any project approvals on the requirements that (1) certain underground lines be owned by a member of Dig Safe to prevent a person from digging into an electrical line and (2) that all projects comply with the electrical code (to be certain, among other things, that electrical wiring is not readily accessible and that fencing is appropriately built to prevent injury). The Department also inspects natural gas and certain propane pipelines for compliance with PUC Rule 6.100 and the federal minimum pipeline safety standards.

In the event that the Department identifies an issue that requires expertise on a health impact, the Department will contact the Department of Health to suggest it join the proceeding. Other sister agencies examine other issues with health implications, such as air purity, water purity, and greenhouse gas impacts.

Another way the Department expresses its policy is through its planning initiatives (e.g., the Comprehensive Energy Plan).

The policies below are contained within the 2016 Comprehensive Energy Plan and express a set of priorities around energy and health developed in collaboration with the Department of Health. Similar sets of policy priorities were developed with other state agencies, including the Agencies of Commerce, Transportation, and Natural Resources. Taken together, these are expressed as the Plan's "guiding economic, environmental, and health goals" to be used when developing and evaluating energy policy. An entire chapter is devoted to discussing these goals, balancing sometimes competing or conflicting goals, and prioritizing actions that positively affect all of the goals. The items below reflect the priorities related to health when developing or evaluating energy policies:

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**POLICY - CONTD.**

**OVERALL**

- Collaborate with other state agencies including Health (via the Climate Cabinet and other means) in the development of the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) and Electric Plan (required through by 30 V.S.A. § 202b and 30 V.S.A. § 202 respectively) to ensure health goals are considered in the plans, as well as in the Department of Building & General Service's overall – and each agency's individual – State Agency Energy Plan.
- Work with the Department of Health to implement the policy goals in the State energy plan for health.

**ACTIVE LIVING**

- Encourage active lifestyles and reduced energy use through compact development, and by providing safe opportunities for walking, biking, and using public transit.
- Promote the development of complete streets and safe and efficient pedestrian, biking and transit network (to reduce the amount of energy used for transportation).

**AIR QUALITY**

- Improve outdoor air quality by reducing emissions from transportation, home and business heating and energy usage, and energy production.
- Provide incentives and promote the use cleaner energy sources (e.g., solar and wind),
- improve energy efficiency, cleaner fuels, shift to cleaner transportation technologies (e.g., electric/hybrid vehicles), and
- change behaviors (e.g., reduced travel, transit/biking/pedestrian travel) to ease air pollution and improve overall air quality.

**INDOOR ENVIRONMENT**

- Improve building weatherization and the use of advanced heating and ventilation technologies (to improve the health and comfort of the indoor environment and reduce energy bills)
- Promote the use of advanced wood-burning stoves and boilers to improve home-heating efficiency and reduce the detrimental impacts of wood burning on indoor and outdoor air quality, especially in areas of at-risk populations.

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

- Consider the negative impacts of climate change on health when developing energy policies.
- Ensure the use of strategies to improve the efficiency of heating and cooling systems and reduce the need for heating and cooling with appropriate building, landscape, and community design.
- Foster environments that promote active transportation (walking, biking, transit) and mitigate green-house gas emissions.
- Continually seek and promote alternative clean and renewable energy projects and the use of clean energy.

**HEALTH EQUITY**

- Assess the health impacts of the energy system to avoid or mitigate potential negative impacts, especially for the most vulnerable population groups such as the elderly, low-income households, and those with chronic or pre-existing medical conditions.
- Ensure the continuity of energy services — particularly space heating and cooling, food refrigeration, and emergency services for those most vulnerable.

## PROGRAM

The Department has limited direct involvement in program administration, though it is involved in program oversight discussed in the Budget section above (oversight of efficiency utility budgets and programs, limited remaining Clean Energy Development Fund rebate programs for advanced wood heating systems).

The Department is more likely to be involved in development of programs related to energy that are overseen and administered by others, some of whom will be incorporating health in their policies more directly through this HiAP initiative. In the instances where that is not the case, the Department can facilitate the involvement of the Department of Health in development or enhancements to programs to better reflect Vermonters' health as a key priority. Some opportunities include:

- Promote delivery of services that improve energy efficiency and healthy housing in tandem.
- Promote and deliver (when funding is available) wood stove change-out programs and guidance on healthy and efficient wood burning practices.
- Collaborate with the Health Department and Agency of Natural Resources to communicate the health benefits of clean energy technologies.
- Work with the Department of Health to develop and implement measures to help track and evaluate how energy policies and decisions are impacting health, especially for those most vulnerable.
- Prepare for increased energy demands due to the warming climate, including increased demand for air conditioning, which is the most effective strategy to reduce the risk of heat illnesses in the home. Consider mitigation strategies such as modifying building design and energy system standards, promoting heat pump installs in lieu of air conditioners, and promoting urban heat island mitigation strategies.
- Work with partners to support programs that address challenges related to improving energy efficiency in older buildings, including hazards from lead and vermiculite insulation.