Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Integrating the Built and Social Environment into Health Assessments for Maternal and Child Health: Creating a Planning-friendly Index

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Environmental and community context earliest in the life course have a profound effect on life-long health outcomes. Yet, standard needs assessments for maternal and child health (MCH) programs often overlook the full range of influences affecting health in-utero and early childhood. To address this, we developed a methodology for assessing community risk in MCH based on six domains integrating 66 indicators across community, environment, socioeconomic indicators, and MCH outcomes. We pilot this methodology in Pennsylvania, and share examples of how local governments, planners, and public health officials across the geographic spectrum can integrate this data into community planning for improved maternal and child health.

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