

## Impact Characterization Table

The potential health impacts of the proposed decision should be characterized based on the following criteria:

- **Direction** – indicates whether the effect is harmful, beneficial, or in some cases – unclear (values = “benefit to health,” “detract from health,” “no change,” or “unsure/both benefit(s) and harm(s)”)
- **Likelihood** – the chance or probability that the effect will occur (values = “highly likely,” “possible,” or “not likely”)
- **Magnitude** – indicates the expected size of the effect; can be described by the number of people affected or by expected changes in the frequency or prevalence of symptoms, illness, or injury (values = “high” if thousands of people affected, “moderate” if hundreds of people affected, “low” if few to none are affected)
- **Distribution** – delineates the spatial and/or socioeconomic boundaries of various groups that are likely to bear differential effects (values = “all groups affected relatively equally” or “disproportionate effects,” with the groups likely to be affected disproportionately identified)
- **Severity (intensity)** – indicates the severity of the effect (values = “severe” for fatal or disabling, “moderate” if needs medical treatment or intervention to resolve, or “minor” if does not need medical treatment or intervention to resolve)
- **Permanence (timing and duration)** – indicates at what point of the proposed activity the effect will occur, how long it will last, and how rapidly the changes will occur (values = “immediate” if effect occurs within 1 year or “long-time” if effect takes 1 to several years; “short-term” if duration of impact is limited or “long-lasting” if impact is expected to persist for an extended period of time or be permanent)
- **Strength of evidence** – indicates the strength of the scientific evidence used to verify (or refute) the connections hypothesized in the *Scoping* step and characterize the potential health impacts of the decision in *Assessment* (values = “strong,” “limited,” “lacking,” and “insufficient”)

### ***Strength of Evidence Determinations***

(modified from the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality)

- **Strong** – There is high confidence that the evidence reflects the hypothesized relationship between variables. Further research is very unlikely to change the confidence or the estimate of effect.
- **Limited** – The evidence reflects the hypothesized relationship between variables, but is limited in depth or replication. There are consistent conclusions, but few studies that confirm the relationship. Further research may change the confidence or the estimate of effect.
- **Lacking** – There is low confidence that the hypothesized relationship between variables exist, such that the evidence results in inconsistent conclusions or the evidence available concludes that no association between the variables of interest exists beyond coincidence.
- **Insufficient** – There is not enough evidence available to draw a conclusion one way or another, such that further research is needed to verify the hypothesized relationship and/or make an estimate of effect.

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[illegible]