ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH HOUSING LAW AND POLICY

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www.countyhealthrankings.org

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

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YOUR PRESENTERS AND FACILITATORS

Justin Rivas  
Network Strategist

Kate Konkle  
Team Director  
Community Learning

Kathleen Hoke  
Director  
Network for Public Health Law - Eastern Region

Kerri Lowrey  
Deputy Director  
Network for Public Health Law - Eastern Region

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR TODAY

1. Describe how public health policy and law connect to the social determinants of health
2. Explore examples of housing policy change
3. Identify how intended and unintended consequences of laws and policies influence health equity
JOIN US FOR MORE DISCUSSION – TODAY!

- **When:** Immediately following the webinar
- **What:** Interactive learning experience, opportunity to share ideas and ask questions
- **How:** Videoconference and/or phone via Zoom
- **Why:** Deepen the webinar learning, allow further exploration

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Improve Health Outcomes & Advance Health Equity
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY HEALTH EQUITY?

Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthy.

This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty and discrimination while creating access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and quality health care.
2019 KEY FINDINGS REPORT

- Explores the link between housing and health
- Call to action to create opportunity and health for all
- Provides references to local data resources, evidence-informed strategies, and examples
SHARE
What challenges exist and what efforts are underway in your community at the intersection of housing and health?

SEVERE HOUSING COST BURDEN
Percentage of households that spend 50% or more of their household income on housing.
Trends in Homeownership by Race/Ethnicity in Large Urban and Smaller Metro Counties

Percentage of households that own a home

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian & Pacific Islander
- Black
- Hispanic
- White

Trends in Housing Cost Burden Among Renters and Owners Nationwide

- Housing Cost Burden (>30% household income)
- Severe Housing Cost Burden (>50% household income)
- Severe Housing Cost Burden among Low Income Households
Places with higher levels of residential segregation have higher rates of severe housing cost burden for both Blacks and Whites.

In most segregated counties (top 10%), on average, rates of severe housing cost burden are 26% for Blacks and 12% for Whites.

2019 STATE REPORTS

- Explores the link between housing and health
- Differences by place and race
- Call to action to create opportunity and health for all

Find your state’s report at: [www.countyhealthrankings.org/state-reports](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/state-reports)
NETWORK FOR PUBLIC HEALTH LAW

- Funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation since 2010
- **One** National Office
- **Five** Regional Offices

✓ **Northern** (Edina, MN); **Western** (ASU Law); **Mid-States** (Michigan SPH); **Southeastern** (UNC SPH); **Eastern** (Maryland Law)

NETWORK FOR PUBLIC HEALTH LAW

- “Promoting health and health equity through law & policy”
- Increase the use and effectiveness of public health laws in protecting, promoting, and improving public health
  - Technical Assistance
  - Deliverables (fact sheets, issue briefs, webinars, 50-state compilations, etc.)
  - Network of experts
Critical link between housing and health has long been recognized

- 19th century – major outbreaks of cholera, small pox, influenza and other communicable diseases tied to housing conditions in urban tenements
- 20th century – federal housing laws enacted to provide “a decent home in a decent environment for every American”

Today, most Americans spend 90% of their time indoors, and nearly 70% of this time is spent in the home

Common Health and Safety Issues:
- Structural defects
- Indoor air quality
- Water quality
- Chemicals
- Unsafe/unhealthy neighborhood or surrounding areas
- Pests and refuse
- Dampness and mold

Associated with:
- Chronic and infectious illness
- Injury
- Poor nutrition
- Poor mental health and brain development
HOUSING IN THE U.S.

- 35 million (40%) of metropolitan U.S. homes have at least one health or safety hazard (NCHH, 2013)

- Disparate impact
  - Households earning under $25K = 5 times more likely to live in inadequate/unhealthy housing
  - Non-Hispanic blacks (9%);
    - Hispanics (7.8%);
    - American Indians/Alaska Natives (7.5%)

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Legal Levers Model for Health Equity in Housing

- Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
- Maintaining Existing Housing (Affordable, Stable, and Safe)
- More people living in quality housing in socioeconomic and racially mixed, healthy neighborhoods
- Increasing the Supply of New Affordable Housing
- Protecting and Enhancing Economic Choice for the Poor

pHLr.org
HOUSING INSPECTIONS: PROACTIVE AND COMPLAINT-DRIVEN

Housing inspections coupled with enforcement action for violations improves housing conditions.

Components of Local Law:

- Licensing or Registration
- **Inspections: Periodic and Complaint-Driven**
- Enforcement

A Guide to Proactive Rental Inspection Programs, ChangeLab Solutions (2014)

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HOUSING INSPECTIONS: INSPECTIONS

**Complaint-Driven**
- Protect tenants from retribution
- Health-related conditions only? (dishwasher broken v. no heat in winter)
- Inspection by municipality (citation authority)

**Proactive**
- Who inspects? Municipal staff? Independent contractors (qualifications/conflict)?
- Periodic
  - Set term (most between 2 and 5 years)
  - May be longer for high pass or shorter for problem units
  - Only on vacancy/turnover
  - Prerequisite to filing for eviction
HOUSING INSPECTIONS: INSPECTIONS

Proactive (continued)

- Coverage—where:
  - External
  - Internal
  - Common areas
  - Individual units

- Coverage—what:
  - Lead
  - Mold
  - Bedbugs
  - Structural
  - Electrical
  - Plumbing
  - HVAC
  - Fire/CO protection
  - Pests
  - And more . . .

HOUSING INSPECTIONS: ENFORCEMENT

Lots of Questions . . .

What agency/agencies should be responsible? How to fund inspections? How to fund enforcement action? When and how much to fine? When to seek injunctive relief—order to repair/remediate? When/how long should the residents be permitted to remain in the home? Zero tolerance? Resident input?

So many conversations about ethical and effective enforcement . . . not a lot of evidence as to what will work and what is ethical.
EXAMPLE: GREENSBORO, N.C.

Proactive Code Enforcement
» City code inspectors inspect rental units every 3 to 5 years or upon complaint
» Owners must register all multifamily properties with the city
» Funded through registration fee ($10-$25)

Benefits
» Identify/monitor properties in greatest need
» Maintain owner contact information
» Educate owners and residents about the code and its requirements

Results
» Complaints dropped 61% over 3 years
» Over 4 year period:
  • 20,000 inspections conducted
  • 8,700 properties brought up to minimum standards
  • 88% of properties compliant in final year

HOUSING INSPECTIONS: YOUR COMMUNITY

Review the provisions of your local housing code. (The Network can definitely help with this!)

Communicate with the responsible agency/agencies about enforcement practices.

Gather information about the housing stock in your community.
  Does your housing code address these issues? Should it?

Propose appropriate changes to your local legislature.

Work with the community to engage on the policy issue.

Ask your CHR&R team and the Network for help!
LAWS THAT PROTECT TENANT RIGHTS: EXAMPLES

‣ Washington law outlines landlords’ obligations to keep rental units safe and livable
  ✔ Comply with code, provide adequate heat, hot water, and locks; maintain structural components and appliances; pest infestations; mold & indoor air quality

‣ Maryland tenant protections
  ✔ Freedom from discrimination
    ▪ Federal Fair Housing Act (color, disability, family status, national origin, race, religion, sex)
    ▪ Maryland Fair Housing Act (Adds: marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation)
  ✔ Landlord may not retaliate against tenant for exercising rights (e.g., reporting hazard)
  ✔ Protection for victims of domestic violence

LAWS THAT PROTECT HOUSING RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

‣ DV is a primary cause of homelessness
  ✔ 1 in 4 homeless women
  ✔ Fleeing unsafe situations, wrongful eviction, etc.

‣ Homelessness contributes to increased risk of chronic health problems, mental illness, substance use, and STIs (Mortality rate among homeless 4-9x higher)

‣ Legal interventions focus on renters (3x more likely to experience DV)

Source: Genesis Women’s Shelter
PROTECTING HOUSING RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

‣ Local Nuisance/Crime-Free Ordinances
  ✓ Can be used to force evictions for "chronic nuisance" households
  ✓ Forced homelessness of DV victims
  ✓ Disparate enforcement
  ✓ On 9/13/2016 (HUD’s OGC)—Guidance on applying federal fair housing standards to enforcement of local nuisance and crime-free housing ordinances against crime victims who require police or other emergency services

Source: The Atlantic

LAWS THAT PROTECT HOUSING RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

✓ 34 states—Address confidentiality programs
✓ 22 states—Allow early termination of leases without penalty
✓ 15 states—Require landlord to change locks when requested
✓ 8 states—Prohibit landlord from penalizing tenant for contacting law enforcement
✓ 12 states—Prohibit housing discrimination against a victim of domestic violence
✓ 14 states—Eviction defense statutes for DV victims
NETWORK RESOURCES ON PROTECTING HOUSING RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Summary Matrix of State Laws Addressing Housing Rights of Domestic Violence (DV) Victims

| State | Landlord Eviction | Tenant Retaliation | Landlord Harassment | Landlord Discrimination | Landlord Retaliation | Tenancy Rights | Eviction Hearings | Tenancy Rights Hearings | Eviction and Tenancy Rights Hearings |
|-------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| AL    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| CA    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| CO    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| CT    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| DE    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| FL    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| GA    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| HI    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| IL    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| IN    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| IA    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| KS    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| KY    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| LA    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| MI    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| MN    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| MS    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| MO    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| MT    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| NE    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| NV    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| NH    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| NJ    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| NM    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| NY    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| NC    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| ND    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| OK    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| OR    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| PA    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| RI    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| SC    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| SD    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| TN    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| TX    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| UT    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| VT    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| VA    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| WA    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| WV    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| WI    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |
| WY    | -                | -                  | -                  | -                      | -                   | -              | -              | -              | -               | -                             |

How does this affect the U.S.?

- In 2015, 17% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2016, 15% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2017, 12% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2018, 10% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2019, 8% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2020, 6% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2021, 4% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2022, 2% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.

How does this affect Wisconsin?

- In 2015, 17% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2016, 15% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2017, 12% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2018, 10% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2019, 8% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2020, 6% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2021, 4% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
- In 2022, 2% of homicide victims were domestic violence victims.
GENTRIFICATION VS. REINVESTMENT

_Gentrification_ seeks to improve conditions in a community through external engagement and investment.

_Reinvestment/equitable development_ seeks to improve conditions in a community from within, through government investment and community engagement.

*Which do you think is better for the health of a community?*

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_Gentrification_ typically requires change in law and:

- Zoning laws
- Economic incentives for businesses
- Use of public funds for road/highway development
- Eminent domain (taking of property by the government—with just compensation)

*Focus is on making conditions fertile for business and people to invest.*

_Reinvestment_ requires similar changes but focus is on economic investment from the government to improve systems and services, to provide opportunity for the community to grow healthier and stronger.
EXAMPLE: CHESTER COUNTY PA; RURAL COMMUNITY

- “Sleepy” small town with vast farmlands, much dedicated to growing mushrooms
- Significant low-income population (farmers, farm laborers (predominantly Hispanic—new residents), long-time older residents)
- Situated as a convenient “bedroom” community for Philadelphia and Wilmington

Law change and public funds instigated gentrification:
- Highway development to make “commute” easier
- Zoning changes to allow for property development (farmland turns into suburbs and Mini-Mansions)

Result?
- Tax base increased; more “high-end” businesses opened
- Property values increased
- Population grew at double statewide rate
EXAMPLE: CHESTER COUNTY PA; RURAL COMMUNITY

But also . . . Result?

- Long-time residents not physically displaced but feel “out of place”
- Existing communities did not experience increase in property value
- Rental costs increased
- Loss of farmland instigated Planning Commission and NGO to push for change to preserve land
- Long-time residents experienced inability to move and future generations forced to leave the community because of housing prices
- Ultimately, businesses and farmers feared high housing costs would not allow for access to lower wage workers (unintended consequence!)

EVIDENCE: WHAT WORKS FOR HEALTH

- Menu of policy and program ideas
- Evidence & disparity ratings
- Implementation resources

CountryHealthRankings.org/WhatWorks
**SOLUTIONS**

Make communities more inclusive and connected

*Inclusive Zoning • Youth Leadership Programs*

Facilitate access to resources needed to secure affordable housing

*Housing Trust Funds • Housing Choice Vouchers*

Addressing capital resources needed to create and preserve affordable housing

*Low-Income Housing Tax Credits • Land Banks*

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**WHO TO WORK WITH: PARTNER CENTER**

What roles do you play in your community?

Think about the people in your community who make positive changes happen. Call them leaders, change-makers, or stakeholders - these are the people with whom you want to partner. This section is all about joining with others to make lasting change in your community.

- **Community Members**
- **Community Development**
- **Government**
- **Business**
- **Educators**
- **Nonprofits**
- **Public Health**
- **Health Care**
- **Funders**

> **Provides guidance around:**

- Why different sectors might care about creating healthy communities
- What they can do
- How to engage them

**TIP:** If you don’t see yourself in any of the sectors listed in the Partner Center, start with Community Members.
Self-directed learning on specific topics

Blend guidance, tools, and activities for hands-on practice and reflection

Topics include:
- Introduction to Equity
- Partnering With Residents
- Getting Started With Policy Change

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
Click the link to answer a few questions about today’s webinar
Questions?

Let’s hear from you...

UPCOMING WEBINAR

Improving Health Equity through Rural Economic Development

3 p.m. EST, Tuesday, August 13th
DISCUSSION GROUP:

- **When**: Immediately following the webinar
- **What**: Interactive learning experience, opportunity to share ideas and ask questions
- **Why**: Deepen the webinar learning, allow further exploration
- **How**: videoconference
- **Who**: YOU! (Space is limited)

POLL: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?

- Elements of a comprehensive housing strategy
- How does housing policy differ in urban versus rural areas?
- Housing efforts without displacement
- What can public health offer housing partners and vice-versa?
STAY CONNECTED

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JOIN US FOR A DISCUSSION GROUP NOW!
REGISTRATION LINK IN CHAT

THANK YOU!