

Healthy Housing

Our health, longevity and well-being are connected to our communities — the places we live, learn, work, worship, play and age. Unhealthy and hazardous housing conditions can lead to lead poisoning, asthma, respiratory illness, cancer, and unintentional injuries.¹

Dust from chipping or peeling lead-based paint is a major source of lead poisoning among Children in Vermont.²

While lead was banned from house paint in 1978 by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, about 70 percent of Vermont homes were built before 1978 and likely contain lead-based paint.² About six million U.S. homes³ are considered substandard, defined in the 2017 report from the Urban Institute⁴ as residential spaces that endanger the health and safety of residents due to structural and physical problems.

In 2017, 124 Vermonters age 65 and older died from unintentional falls.¹

Call on U.S. policymakers to fund monitoring and enforcement programs to uphold existing housing codes to prevent poor living conditions. Create accountability systems that work on behalf of residents and provide support to remedy life-threatening living conditions immediately. Recognize that healthy housing begins with healthy communities, and adopt health-in-all-policies frameworks.⁵ Urge Congress to adequately fund rental assistance options to ensure the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Agriculture can meet community needs for affordable housing.⁶

Where people live — not just how they live — impacts their health and life expectancy. Smart local policies that prioritize health can make a difference. Research shows well-maintained sidewalks⁷ encourage physical activity, and safe biking networks lead to more cycling and fewer injuries among bicyclists. Rates of preventable deaths — such as deaths from heart disease, diabetes and cancer — typically go down in communities where local public health spending goes up.⁸

The COVID-19 pandemic has markedly exposed Vermont's housing crisis. Populations who live in substandard dwellings or have no reliable housing are especially vulnerable to the risks of COVID-19. For information on homelessness and COVID-19, see the commentary by the Committee on Temporary Shelter: <https://cotsonline.org/2020/03/16/homelessness-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/>



**SATURDAY
Healthy
Housing**

NPHW 2020

FOR SCIENCE
Our health and well-being are connected to our communities – but 6 million U.S. homes are unsafe.

FOR ACTION
Adopt health-in-all-policies approaches to support healthy housing and communities.

FOR HEALTH
Work to create a local healthy housing ordinance.

www.nphw.org



**NATIONAL
PUBLIC
HEALTH
WEEK**

¹ [National Center for Healthy Housing](#)

² [Vermont Department of Health](#)

³ [National Center for Healthy Housing](#)

⁴ [Urban Institute](#)

⁵ [APHA Healthy Community Design](#)

⁶ [APHA](#)

⁷ [Journal of Public Health](#)

⁸ [Health Affairs](#)