



**HousingWorksRI**



at Roger Williams University

# HEALTHY HOUSING

*Common housing conditions that impact health*

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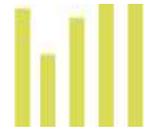


# Definition of Healthy Homes

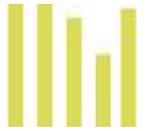


The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a *healthy home* as

“one that is marked not only by the absence of health and safety threats (lead, indoor allergens, radon, carbon monoxide) in the built environment, but also one that nourishes physical, mental, social and environmental well-being.”



# How is housing connected to health?



- 80% of our health is determined by our environment; inside our homes, schools, jobs and neighborhood
- Safe, affordable housing is foundational to all aspects of life and is known to bolster access to healthcare and positive health outcomes
- Stable, affordable housing is known to decrease healthcare expenses, specifically Medicaid and Emergency services, and increase primary care utilization





# Existing Conditions in RI



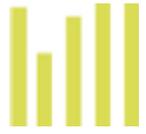
- RI has the third oldest housing stock in the country
- **74%** of our housing was **built before 1980**, which indicates a high probability of lead paint in the majority of our housing stock
  - Children living in RI's core cities are at greater risk of exposure to lead
- **62%** of our housing was **built before 1970**, indicating a high probability of asbestos
- Between 2012 and 2016, RI had the **second highest percentage** of children of all incomes (73%) living in housing built before 1980 in the U.S.



# Health Hazards within the home

- Water intrusion
- Utility deficiencies
- Lead paint
- Radon
- Asbestos
- Pests
- Overcrowding
- Poor construction or deterioration





# Lead

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- **7%** of children entering kindergarten in RI had elevated lead levels in 2018
- In the four core cities, **10%** of children entering kindergarten had elevated lead levels
- Even at low levels, lead exposure can negatively affect a child's health, development, and brain
- Low income children and children of color remain more likely to be lead poisoned than other children





# Asthma



- Asthma is a chronic respiratory diseases which is triggered by air pollutants, cigarette smoke, allergens, exposure to cold air or temperature change. This includes household triggers such as:
  - Mold
  - Dust mites
  - Cockroaches
  - Pet fur
- In RI there were **1,452 hospitalizations** with primary asthma diagnosis for children under age 18 between 2012-2016
  - Hospitalization rates were highest in: **Providence, Central Falls, East Providence, Johnston, Pawtucket, Barrington, and Warren**
- Nationally, asthma rates are highest among males, Black and Native American children, and children living in poverty

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**\$10,608** per Child

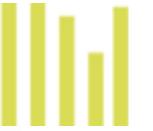
## Hospitalization Cost

Hospitalizations for asthma cost \$10,608 per child in Rhode Island, **and over \$21M annually.**<sup>13</sup>

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# Additional Hazards



## Radon

- Radon is an odorless, colorless, hazardous gas that causes lung cancer
  - There is no safe level of radon exposure
- **1 in 4 homes in RI contain radon at or above the EPA's action level**
  - This is significantly higher than the national average of 1 in 15
- **More than 50%** of tested homes in **Exeter and Richmond** exceeded the EPA's action level

## Asbestos

- Asbestos is a hazardous class of minerals that can cause cancer and respiratory illnesses
- Houses built before 1970 contain asbestos
  - **62%** of homes in RI are built before 1970
- Under RI law, **one and two-family homes** are generally exempted from Asbestos Control Regulations

## Unintentional Injury (trip and fall hazards)

- In 2016, housing related falls resulted in 1,629 emergency room visits by RI children age six and under
- Nationally, 1 in 4 people aged 65 or older falls



# Elements of a Healthy Home





# Healthy Housing Programs & Governance



## **RI Department of Health**

- Center for Healthy Homes and Environment:
  - Asbestos Control Program
  - Radon Control Program
  - Environmental Lead Program
- Division of Community, Health & Equity
  - Asthma Control Program

## **RI General Law and Regulations**

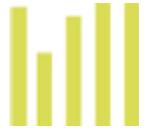
- Minimum Housing Standards
- Property Maintenance Code
- Building Code
- Residential Landlord and Tenant Act
- Zoning Ordinances
- Real Estate Transfer Disclosure Requirements
- Lead Hazard Mitigation Act
- Radon Control Act
- Asbestos Abatement Act

## **Municipal Governments**

- Department of Inspections
- Department of Community Development

## **Other Agencies**

- RI Alliance of Healthy Homes (RIAHH)
- Childhood Lead Action Program (CLAP)
- RIH LeadSafe Program
- Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
- CAP Agencies



# *Thank you!*

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*Data in this presentation comes from RI Kids Count 2018 Factbook, RI Alliance for Healthy Homes, the Rhode Island Department of Health, the U.S. Center for Disease Control, and the U.S. Census.*