



# HUD NEWS

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## NATIONAL HEALTHY HOMES CONFERENCE TO ADDRESS RISKS FROM ASTHMA TO BEDBUGS

WASHINGTON – All across America, there are homes that can actually harm those who live in them. From lead-based paint that can poison children, to cancer-causing radon, to cockroach and bedbug infestations. Next month, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is hosting a National Healthy Homes Conference in Denver that will explore the latest research and interventions from dozens of public health, housing, and environmental experts from more than 200 organizations.

From June 20-23, these experts will present findings on how to produce healthier housing for people living with disabilities, including a growing number of adults with autism who are confronted with the lack of supportive housing options.

“It’s shocking that the leading causes of preventable death, disease and disability are right in our own homes,” said HUD Deputy Secretary Ron Sims. “Home ought to be a place where we feel safest, not a place where we’re most likely to get sick or be injured. We need an honest conversation about supporting efforts to improve the health and safety conditions in our homes.”

Asthma, lead poisoning, house fires, falls and drowning in bathtubs are just a few of the hazards that families face. For example, studies find that mold, cockroaches and dust mites trigger more than 4.5 million cases of asthma each year, costing \$3.5 billion. In addition, lead poisoning and cancer are caused by lead-based paint and exposure to other environmental toxins, generate an estimated \$53 billion in annual medical costs. Hazards that lead to falls and burns add another \$222 billion.

To address these critical problems, HUD developed Seven Principles of Healthy Homes:

- **Dry** – Damp houses provide a nurturing environment for mites, roaches, rodents, and molds, all of which are associated with asthma.
- **Clean** – Clean homes help reduce pest infestations and exposure to contaminants;
- **Pest-Free** – Recent studies show there is a connection between exposure to mice and cockroaches and the development of asthma. Improper treatment of pest infestations can leave pesticide residues, which could cause neurological damage and cancer.
- **Safe** – The majority of injuries occur in the home. Falls are the most frequent cause of residential injuries, followed by injuries from objects in the home, burns, and poisonings.

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- **Contaminant-Free** – It is important to keep homes clear of contaminants such as lead, asbestos particles, radon gas, carbon monoxide, pesticides, volatile organic compounds, and tobacco smoke. Exposures to these contaminants are far higher indoors than outside.
- **Ventilated** – Studies show that increasing the fresh air supply in a home improves respiratory health. Even cooking in a poorly-ventilated home can produce harmful pollution.
- **Maintained** – Poorly maintained homes are at risk for moisture and pest problems. Lead-based paint in older homes is the primary cause of lead poisoning, which affects some 240,000 U.S. children.

### **About NHHC**

The National Healthy Homes Conference will be held in Denver, June 20-23 and feature more than 150 educational sessions and workshops, allowing officials from the public health, housing, safety and environmental communities to collaborate and share ideas. NHHC is the housing industry's most comprehensive, progressive and educational forum on the issue of healthy, safe and sustainable homes. The conference is a federally sponsored event, bringing together a wide range of health, housing, and environmental professionals to work toward making housing healthy, safe and environmentally sustainable.

### **Volunteer Event Kicks-Off Conference**

One of the highlights of NHHC takes place prior to the official start, when HUD and Rebuilding Together rehabilitate 25 homes in a Denver neighborhood on June 18 and 19. The event, called Building a Healthy Neighborhood, will bring together more than 300 volunteers to make the homes of local families safer and healthier. Volunteers may register at [www.healthyhomesconference.org](http://www.healthyhomesconference.org).

For more information about NHHC, please contact Shantae Goodloe at 202-402-6607 or Niki Mitchell at (703) 683-7743.

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*HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD is working to strengthen the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meet the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination; and transform the way HUD does business. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov) and [hud.gov/espanol](http://hud.gov/espanol).*