

Healthy Section 8 and Affordable Housing Demonstration Project

Boston Public Health Commission
Eugene Barros- Project Director

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Overview

- Background
- Project Goals/Objectives
- Partnering with Section 8 Housing Administrators
- Trainings/Resources
- Evaluation plans

Background

- Healthy Public Housing Initiative
 - Funded through HUD HH Technical Grant
 - Documented extent of pest infestation and pesticide use in BHA
 - Impact on health, especially asthma
- Healthy Pest Free Housing Initiative
 - Funded through Kellogg Foundation/EPA
 - Institutionalized IPM at BHA
- Breathe Easy at Home



Healthy Section 8 & Affordable Housing Demonstration Project Goal

- To improve the health and home environment of low-income children and families by developing and implementing new models of staff training, community, resident and landlord engagement, inspection, remediation and connection to resources , promoting sustainable IPM, smoke free housing policies, and window guards.



Healthy Section 8 & Affordable Housing

Demo Project 5 Objectives:

1. Train inspectors and prep for NEHA credentialing
2. Develop an “Early Warning System” (test & implement system to assist tenants in maintaining their housing)
3. Landlord Engagement and legal advocacy (Training, education, engagement, promotion of IPM/smoke free housing/window guards).
4. Healthy Homes for Children with asthma in high risk populations (enroll 70 families who have children with asthma, provide asthma education, environmental inspections and intervention)
5. Engage & leverage culturally specific neighborhood and community partnerships

Objectives designed to Increase Housing Stability

- Connect tenants and landlords to resources, services and public assistance benefits to support housing stability and achieve better health and environmental outcomes.
- (fuel/utility assistance, weatherization, legal advocacy, food stamps, health insurance)



Healthy Section 8 and Affordable Housing Demonstration Project

- ▶ Lead Agency
 - ▶ Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC)
- ▶ Key Partners
 - ▶ Metro Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP)
 - ▶ Boston Housing Authority (BHA) Leased Housing Division
 - MBHP & BHA administer Section 8 in Boston
 - 20,000 families
 - Conduct about 18,000 inspections a year

Other Partners

- ▶ Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)
- ▶ Asian Community Development Corporation (CDC)
- ▶ Boston Medical Center/ Medical Legal Partnership
- ▶ Boston Univ. School of Public Health (BUSPH)
- ▶ Health Resources in Action (HRiA)
- ▶ Housing Opportunities Unlimited (HOU)
- ▶ Northeastern University Public Health Advocacy Institute (PHAI)
- ▶ Tufts Medical Center



Metro-Boston Housing Partnership Infrastructure

- **Resident Client Services Support:** case management, relocation, apartment list, homelessness prevention and support, housing consumer education, workshops, family self-sufficiency programs, mediation.
- **MBHP Landlord Resources:** workshops, foreclosure prevention and tenancy preservation & mortgage modification, leasing assistance
- Nationally recognized hoarding program

Section 8 Inspectors Training

- 29 Inspectors trained in the “NCHH Healthy Homes Essentials”
- Will take the NEHA “Healthy Homes Specialist Credential exam”
- Housekeeping Training: Inspectors will be able to recognize residents with housekeeping problems early and take action before they become housing emergencies.
- Hoarding training for BHA inspectors
- Mold training for BHA Inspectors (MLP)

Client services Staff Training

- **Utilities Rights Training:** Protect the Basic Rights of Utility Consumers
 - Prevent Gas & Electricity Utility Shut-offs
 - Restore Terminations
 - Work out Favorable Payment Plans
 - Locate Assistance for Paying Utility Bills
- **Virtual Gateway Training:** One stop shop for public assistance programs
 - health insurance, fuel assistance, weatherization, child care, food stamps,



Resident services Staff Training

- **Medical Legal Partnership Training:** integrate legal assistance into the medical setting as a vital component of patient care.
- **-MLP Housing and Health Training:** allows front line staff to make connection between housing and health and identification of resources

Landlord Training

- **Smoke Free Housing:**
 - 12 landlords /200 units combined
- **IPM Training:**
 - 9 landlords 535 units combined
 - 50 landlords will receive financial assistance
- **Window Guards Training:**
 - 38 landlords trained/ 105 units

Residents

- Tenant assistance is targeted to children with asthma
 - Asthma education and home assessment
 - Medical case management as needed
 - IPM services
 - Home cleaning and home maintenance education
 - Mattress and pillow covers and cleaning supplies
 - overall connection to other resources

Evaluation Plan for landlords and staff

- On-line survey every 8 months to monitor
 - usefulness
 - attitudes
 - intentions
 - experiences
 - challenges to taking action

The End

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Healthy Homes for All: Improving Children's Health in Diverse Communities

David Turcotte, ScD; Joann Vaillette; Emily Vidrine; Susan Woskie, Ph.D.; Rebecca Gore; Fred Youngs;
University of Massachusetts Lowell

Carla Caraballo & Bophamony Vong;
Lowell Community Health Center



Partners & Roles

- University of Massachusetts Lowell
- Lowell Community Health Center
- Coalition for a Better Acre
- Community Teamwork Inc.
- Lowell Housing Authority
- Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership



Intervention Program Design

- Recruit/enroll families with asthmatic children
- Provide health/environmental assessments
- Educational interventions & remediations
- Conduct midterm/final assessments
- Evaluate health outcome changes

Identify Asthma Triggers/Safety Hazards

- Roach/Mouse
- Dust Mite
- Outdoor Allergens
- Dampness/Moisture
- Furry Pets
- Chemical/Combustion/Radon
- Environmental Tobacco Smoke
- Injury (burn, fall, fire, poison)

Intervention Strategies

- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Industrial Cleaning
- Dust Mite & Dust Control
- Education
- Other

Evaluate Intervention Effectiveness

- Baseline data-Initial Assessment
- Compare to final assessment data
- Indicators
 - Asthma related medical indicators
 - Asthma related positive behavior indicators
 - Negative exposure indicators (Asthma)
 - Positive safety related indicators



Other Program Activities

- Community level education
- Training for community partner's staff
- Build capacity & sustainability
- Incorporate healthy home practices

Accomplishments

- Conducted 178 home assessment
- Completed 160 housing interventions
- Evaluation of intervention effectiveness (midterms & final assessments)
- Trained 75 partners' staff in HH practices
- Provided HH education to 750 community members

Preliminary Results

Asthma Indicators

	Pre Intervention (baseline average)	Post Intervention (final average)
Wheezing <i># of times child experienced wheezing in the past 4 weeks</i>	4.7	1.1*
Asthma Attacks <i># of times child had asthma attack or trouble breathing in the past 4 weeks</i>	1.3	0.1*
Doctor Visits <i># of times child went to doctor office or clinic for asthma problems in the past 4 weeks</i>	0.9	0.2*
Emergency Room/ Hospital Visits <i># of emergency room or hospital visits due to asthma in the past 4 weeks</i>	7 (total reported)	0 (total reported)

*Statistically significant difference by both population and paired tests ($p < 0.0001$)
n=56 (39 households)

Preliminary Results (Con't)

Household Pests

	Pre Intervention Total	Post Intervention Total
Rodents <i># homes with evidence of mice/rats</i>	7	3
Cockroaches <i># homes with evidence of cockroaches</i>	12	6
<i>n=36 (only households that didn't move mid-program)</i>		

Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Black	1	1.79
White	8	14.29
Asian	10	17.86
Hispanic	28	50.00
Brazilian/Portuguese	5	8.93
Mixed/Unknown	4	7.14
n=56 (39 households)		

Successes

- Community partnerships
- Multi-cultural/multi-lingual groups
- Comprehensive health/environmental assessment tools
- Building trusting relationships
- Adaptability
- Database & Quality Assurance

Lessons Learned

- Start early & stay on schedule
- Expect delays
- Don't reinvent the wheel
- Start outreach/recruitment early
- Importance of ongoing outreach
- Tracking system is a must
- Regular communication is key

Lessons Learned

- Don't schedule initial appointments too far in advance
- Importance of building trust with families
- One-on-one outreach a must
- Need to reinforce HH education
- Provide value on all home visits
- Respecting diverse cultures/practices



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Collaboration for Healthy Homes

Jorge Villanueva, Organizer
Healthy Homes Collaborative





The Healthy Homes Collaborative is a non profit association of community based organizations committed to eliminating environmental health threats in homes and communities.

THE HEALTHY HOMES COLLABORATIVE

HHC Approach to Healthy Homes

- Community
 - Health Promoters
 - Organizers
 - Legal Advocates
 - Experts
- Government Agencies
- Local and State Policy Advocacy



HHC members at California Healthy Housing Symposium-Los Angeles

Community Outreach



Community Health Promoter
meeting with tenants

- Build trust to be able to educate families
 - Health
 - Housing rights
 - Services
- Identify organizing opportunities to impact broader change

Creating Healthy Homes

- Popular education to tenants
- Meetings with local elected officials
- Policy advocacy to create new Healthy Homes laws



Presentation materials used to educate tenants on how they can create a Healthy Home

Health Promoters, Organizing, Legal Advocates & Experts

- we are able to leverage resources
- maximize impact of individual organizational approaches to HH issues
- Local and state policy



Apartment Building in greater LA area

Government Community Partnerships



HHC Staff training LA Code Inspectors

- Space to take issues to task
- Opportunities for cross training and collaboration
- Opportunities to create partnerships outside of field of expertise

Questions and Answers



HHC Staff conducting an RRP training at the Apartment Owners Association of Greater Los Angeles



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THE HEALTHY HOMES COLLABORATIVE