



BUILDING A FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTHY HOUSING

Changing Our Homes as We Age: Results from Formative Research

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AARP Knowledge Management

Changing Our Homes As We Age

- Personal concerns as one ages
- Attitudes and perceptions toward home modification
- Modifications...and willingness to make them
- Modifications...and terms to describe them



Personal concerns as one ages

- Physical and financial health: two most critical elements
 - For persons over 65, it's about avoiding conditions that limit independence and mobility
 - For persons under 65, it's being prepared to live a full and active life before and during retirement



Attitudes and Perceptions

- Older participants have already had the experience of caregiving and/or making changes to a friend or family member's home.
- Younger participants have not made changes...and don't plan to anytime soon.



Modifications...and willingness to make them

- Low-to-modest cost changes
 - Maintenance check lists
 - Weatherizing
 - Having fire extinguishers
 - Having appropriate lighting
 - Removing/fastening floor coverings



Modifications...and terms to describe them

- Upgrades / fix-ups / changes
- “comfort and safety”
- We need to develop a new vocabulary for talking about these issues and for getting individuals to make the small, incremental changes important to maintaining independence.



Some Modest Suggestions

“My swing is as strong as ever, but everyone needs a little help carrying in the groceries” [identify with a celebrity]



Some Modest Suggestions

“Put in better outdoor lighting...so you can see when your daughter gets home from her date”
[intergenerational notion]



Some Modest Suggestions

- “I’m widening my doorways...to make room from my new wide-screen television” [for active aging]





BUILDING A FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTHY HOUSING

Marketing Healthy Housing – Assuring Healthy Housing for the Senior Population

**Example Projects in
Cleveland/Cuyahoga County**
Stuart Greenberg, Environmental Health Watch

Environmental Health Watch

- Community organization formed in 1980
- Focus- indoor environments, chemical accidents, affordable green housing
- Activities -
 - education, training & direct service
 - research & demonstration
 - policy development & advocacy
- Staff: 4 FT, 5 PT



Healthy Homes for Seniors Projects

- Case Healthy Homes and Patients Program-
 - HUD HH Demonstration (2006-08)
 - Swetland Center for Environmental Health, Case School of Medicine; House Call Program, Family Medicine Clinic-University Hospitals; Community Housing Solutions
- Tenants for Healthy Housing-
 - EPA Environmental Justice, EPA Aging Initiative, McGregor Foundation (2007-09)
 - Cleveland Tenants Organization, Alliance for Healthy Homes



Home Health & Safety Hazards- Children and Elderly Most at Risk

- Greater exposure
- Increased vulnerability



Case Healthy Homes and Patients (CHHAP)

- In-home environmental health experience for physicians in training on health and safety of inner city housing
- Health and safety home improvements for their infant and elderly clinic patients



CHHAP Home Visits



- House Call Program - physician visits to house-bound elderly
- EHW healthy housing specialist inspections for health and safety hazards
- First-year residents and medical students participate

CHHAP Intervention Strategy

- Integrate housing and behavioral interventions
 - EHW focuses on environment
 - Health and safety items
 - Low-level repairs and improvements
 - Referral for more extensive work
 - Physician focuses on healthy behavior
- Address multiple housing-related health hazards and injury risks



Health & Safety Items

- HEPA “dirt finder” vacuum
- Power strips, extension cords
- Night lights, motion-activated lights, touch-on lamp switches, emergency flashlight
- Fire extinguisher, smoke & CO detectors
- Allergen barrier pillow & mattress covers
- Digital thermometer, first aid kit
- Electric heaters, fans, air conditioner
- Shelving, storage bins • Cordless phone



Health & Safety Items

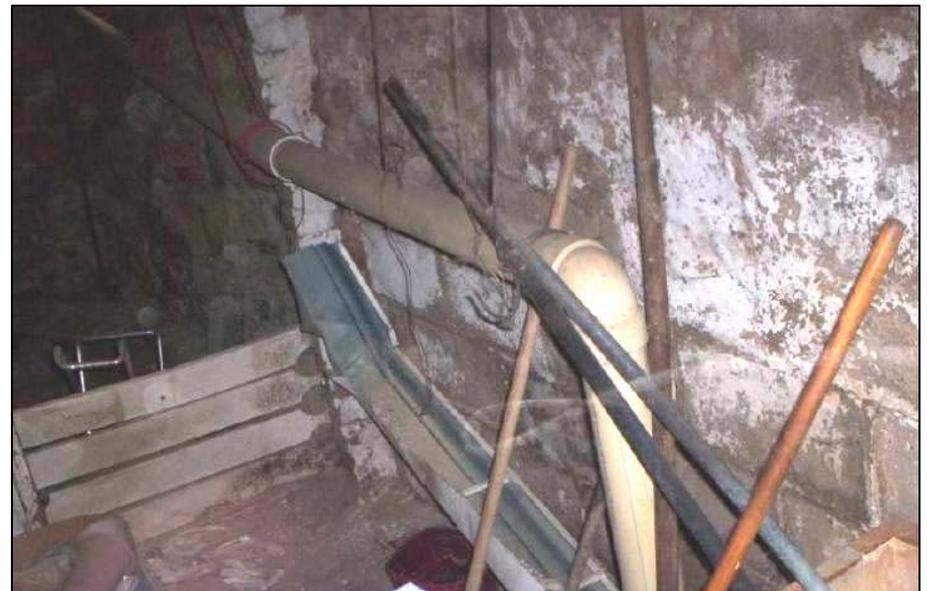


Hazards Found

- Decades of deferred maintenance- roof leaks, missing gutters, frayed wires
- Jury-rigged repairs- plumbing, electrical, ramps, furnace
- Extreme clutter- impeding movement, cleaning and pest control
- Fall hazards- worn carpeting, extension cords, missing hand rails, broken stairs



Deferred maintenance and jury-rigged repairs



Intervention Focus

- Pests and pesticides
- Moisture control
- Fall hazards
 - Steps and railings
 - Lighting
- Remove or secure throw rugs
- Electrical hazards
 - Too few outlets
 - Worn cords
- Duct cold air return to furnace







Tenants for Healthy Housing

- HUD-subsidized multifamily buildings
- Curriculum project
 - EPA Aging Initiative
 - Alliance for Healthy Housing and Cleveland Tenants Organization
- Organizing project
 - EPA Environmental Justice
 - CTO and Alliance of HUD Tenants



Tenants for Health Housing Goals

- Self-protective actions to control indoor environmental health hazards.
- Landlord-tenant law and joint action to secure needed repairs and improved maintenance to reduce exposures.
- Improved enforcement of health and housing codes related to residential exposures.



Tenants for Health Housing Activities

- Tenant education
 - housing-related hazards
 - self-protective measures
 - building changes needed
- Tenant organizing
 - needed repairs and maintenance
 - strategies to secure changes



Tenants for Health Housing Activities

- Meetings with building owners/ managers
- Meetings with local health and housing officials
- Workshops for owners/managers and officials



Tenant HH education sessions

- Can your home make you sick?
- Who is responsible?
- What is an unhealthy home?
- Pests and pesticides
- Too cold, too hot
- When you burn things in the home
- Products that pollute
- Tobacco smoke
- Mold and moisture
- Protecting kids who live with or visit you



Tenant organizing sessions

- Landlord's legal duty
- 30-days written notice
- Joint actions
 - Petitions
 - Rent strikes
 - Publicity
 - Public officials
- Document, document, document
- Retaliation



Web links

- USEPA Aging Initiative
 - <<http://www.epa.gov/aging/>>
- Healthy Homes Curriculum for Older Americans
 - <http://www.afhh.org/res/res_hh_curric_4_older_Americans.htm>
- Environmental Health Watch
 - <www.ehw.org>



Thanks for your attention

www.ehw.org

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