Link Between Housing & Health

“The connection between health and the dwelling of the population is one of the most important that exists”. [1]

Florence Nightingale

Unhealthy Homes

- American Housing Survey for 2005
- 2 million homes have severe problems.
- 4.2 million homes have moderate problems.
- Rating system does not include:
  - Insects
  - Humidity and Condensation
  - Lead-Based Paint, Radon, and Asbestos
Why Do We Care? 
Costs of Unhealthy Homes

- Annual costs for environmentally attributable childhood diseases in the U.S: $54.9 billion.[8]
  - $43.9 Billion from Lead Poisoning
  - $ 9.2 Billion from Neurobehavioral Disorders
  - $ 2.0 Billion from Asthma
  - $ 0.3 Billion from Childhood Cancer

- Additional costs from asthma care stem from the more than 10 million missed school days a year.
- Asthma contributes to approximately 3% of total health care costs. [9]
Different Approaches

Primary Prevention
Secondary Prevention
Epidemiologic Triangle

HEALTH
- Lead
- Radon
- Allergens/asthma
- Combustion products
- Unintentional Injuries
- Insects and Rodents
- Mold and Moisture
- Pesticides
- Asbestos
- Fire

HOUSING
- Well constructed
- Well maintained
- Comfortable
- Affordable
- Healthy

National Center for Healthy Housing
Healthy Homes Training Center
The Real World is Complex

- Current knowledge
- Economic factors
  - What funds are available at government level and at family level?
- Social and cultural
- Political and legal factors
  - Is the condition reportable?
  - Is it mandatory to report?
  - Are there guidelines available?
- “Do No Harm“
- Precautionary principles
Until effective standards for the domestic environment are devised, it is likely that children will continue to be employed as biological indicators of substandard housing. [34]
Types of Codes

1. Building / Residential Codes
2. Housing / Property Maintenance Codes
3. Health / Sanitation Codes
4. Landlord – Tenant Laws
5. Product Standards
6. Hazard Management Laws
7. Disclosure Laws
Jurisdiction

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2. Local and sometimes State. HUD HQS
3. State and Local Health Department
4. State and Sometimes Local – Not Federal
5. Federal
6. Federal and State
7. Federal and State
Model Codes for Housing

- Building Construction – Int’l Building Code;
- Residential Construction – Int’l Residential Code
- Rehab – Int’l Existing Building Code
- Electrical – ICC Electrical Code
- Fire – Int’l Fire Code and National Fire Protection Association
- Ventilation – Int’l Mechanical Code;
- Plumbing – Int’l Plumbing Code;
- Sewage – Int’l Private Sewage Disposal Code;
- All Buildings – Int’l Property Maintenance Code
Zoning v. Building v. Housing

Types of Codes:

- Zoning Code
- Building Code / Residential Code
- Housing / Property Maintenance Code

Determines:

- What can be built or modified.
- How it must be built or modified.
- How it must be maintained.
Building v. Housing

- Building or Residential Codes are triggered by a decision of the owner or the occupant to modify the home.

- Housing or Property Maintenance Codes set minimum standards for all housing whether or not the owner or occupant want to modify the home.
Housing v. Health Codes

- Housing or property maintenance code typically managed and enforced by building code inspector.
- Health or sanitation code typically managed or enforced by health department

Difference in Perspective and Knowledge
International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC)

- Model Housing Code
- Required in:
  - Virginia and New York Mandate It
  - More than 600 communities
- Some States Recommend It
- Growing in popularity
- Enforcement concerns

National Center for Healthy Housing
Healthy Homes Training Center
HUD’s Housing Quality Standards

- Section 8 / Housing Choice Voucher
- Linked to Subsidy
- Performance Requirement
- Acceptability Criteria
Landlord – Tenant Law

- Why Focus on Rental Property?
- Regulating Contractual Relationship to Avoid Abuse
- Special Rental Standards
  - Rental Housing Quality Standards
  - Certificate of Occupancy
  - College Towns and Large Urban Areas
- Uniform Residential Landlord Tenant Act (URLTA) – 21 States
URLTA – Landlord Obligations

- Comply with applicable building and housing codes affecting health and safety.
- Make all repairs and do whatever is necessary to put and keep the premises in a fit and habitable condition.
- Keep all common areas in a clean and safe condition.
- Maintain electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air-conditioning, and other facilities and appliances in “good and safe working order and condition.”
- Provide and maintain appropriate receptacles for removal of garbage and other waste, and arrange for their removal.
- Supply running water and reasonable amounts of hot water at all times and reasonable heat (between 10/1 and 5/1), except where the law does not require the building be so equipped, or heat or hot water is generated by an installation controlled by the tenant.
Comply with all obligations primarily imposed upon tenants by applicable building and housing codes.

Keep tenant’s premises as clean and safe as the condition of the premises permit.

Dispose of garbage, rubbish and other wastes from the dwelling unit “in a clean and safe manner.

Keep plumbing fixtures in the tenant’s dwelling unit as clear as their condition permits.

Use in a reasonable manner all electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air-conditioning, and other facilities and appliances.
Product Management Standards

- Consumer Product Safety Commission
- Environmental Protection Agency
- State and Local Law Preemption?
  - Federal Silence
  - Specific Injury
- Safety v. Health
- Basic Products v. Alarms
- Children’s Products v. Other Products
- Resale and Recall
Hazard Management Standards

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Asbestos – NESHAP - > 4 Units
- Lead – Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule
- Needed when product standards failed
- Formaldehyde? Vinyl? Arsenic-treated Lumber?
Disclosure Laws

- Lead Disclosure at Lease or Sale of Target Housing
- Renovator Notice to Owner and Occupant for Potential Lead-Based Paint at Target Housing and Child-Occupied Facilities
- Mold
- Water Damage / Intrusion
- Radon
- Asbestos
- Catch-All
Resources

- National Conference of State Legislatures / NCHH Report
- Lead-Based Paint
  - NCHH’s Federal Benchbook
  - NCHH’s State and Local Benchbook
- Environmental Law Institute
- National Center for Healthy Housing
Resources

- www.municode.com
- www.generalcode.com/webcode2.html
- municipalcode.lexisnexis.com
- www.healthyhomestraining.org/codes
Do Housing Codes Work?

- Linkage to Landlord-Tenant Law
- Complaint-Based Enforcement
- Systematic Code Enforcement
- Blight v. Safety v. Health
- Perspectives and Confidence
CBCAG

- Community Building Code Administrative Grant Bill
- Passed House of Representatives in July 2008
- Focuses on New AND Existing Structures
- Requires Coordination with Health Department
IPMC Proposals

- International Code Council
  - Final Action Hearing 9/17 to 9/22
- Alliance for Healthy Homes and NCHH
- Two Proposals Will Pass
  - Pest Control Responsibilities – Owner and Occupant Responsible in Multi-Family Housing
  - Clothes Dryer Exhaust – Vent Outside Per Label
- 7 Proposals Required 2/3 Vote of Officials
  - Incorporate EPA RRP Interior & Exterior
  - Pest Elimination Definition
  - Carbon Monoxide Alarm
  - Maximum Water Temperature in Shower or Bath
  - Smooth Hard, Nonabsorbent Surfaces in Bathrooms on Multi-Family Housing
  - Health and Safety Chapter
Core Healthy Homes Principles

- Start with People
- Keep It:
  - Dry
  - Clean
  - Pest-Free
  - Ventilated
  - Safe
  - Contaminant-Free
  - Maintained