

**National Center for Environmental Health  
Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services**

**The Healthy Homes Initiative**

Housing conditions can significantly affect public health. Nationwide there are more than 6 million substandard housing units. Residents of these units are at increased risk for childhood lead poisoning, asthma, fire and electrical injuries, falls, rodent bites, exposure to indoor toxicants, and other illnesses and injuries. In its Healthy People 2010 goals, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services calls for a 52% reduction in the number of substandard occupied housing units throughout the United States.



Most public health efforts take a categoric approach to health and safety hazards in the home, focusing narrowly on one issue, even in the presence of multiple issues. A Healthy Homes approach is holistic and comprehensive and public health, environmental health, and housing professionals with the requisite training and tools necessary to address the broad range of housing deficiencies and hazards associated with unhealthy and unsafe homes.

**What Is CDC’s Healthy Homes Initiative?**

CDC’s Healthy Homes Initiative is a coordinated, comprehensive, and holistic approach to preventing diseases and injuries that result from housing-related hazards and deficiencies. The focus of the initiative is to identify health, safety, and quality-of-life issues in the home environment and to act systematically to eliminate or mitigate problems.

The Healthy Homes Initiative seeks to

- Broaden the scope of single-issue public health programs, such as childhood lead poisoning prevention and asthma programs, to address multiple housing deficiencies that affect health and safety.
- Build capacity and competency among public health, environmental health, and housing professionals, and others who work in the community, to develop and manage comprehensive and effective healthy homes programs.
- Promote, develop, and implement cross-disciplinary activities at the federal, state, tribal, and community levels to address the problem of unhealthy and unsafe housing through surveillance, research, and comprehensive prevention programs.
- Facilitate the collection of local data and monitor progress toward reducing or eliminating housing deficiencies and hazards.
- Develop guidelines to assess, reduce, and eliminate health and safety risks.
- Promote research to determine causal relations between substandard housing and adverse health effects.

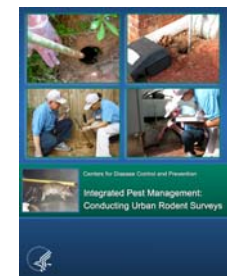
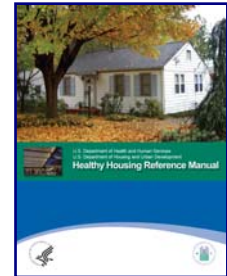
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## Healthy Homes Initiative, Continued

- Expand collaborations with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), national associations and organizations, academia, community-based organizations, and others, including the American Public Health Association, National Environmental Health Association, and the World Health Organization.
- Identify and implement low-cost, reliable, and practical methods to reduce health and safety risks in substandard housing.

### CDC Products Related to the Healthy Homes Initiative

- The *Healthy Housing Reference Manual* is a comprehensive guide to the relation among housing construction, housing systems, and health. In the 30 years since the first edition (*Basic Housing Inspection*) was published, we have begun to learn more about how specific housing conditions are related to disease and injury. This new edition, written by CDC and HUD, gives public health and housing professionals the tools necessary to ensure that housing stock is safe, decent, affordable, and healthy for our citizens, particularly children and the elderly, who are often most vulnerable and spend more time in the home.
- *Integrated Pest Management: Conducting Urban Rodent Surveys* updates the 1974 CDC *Urban Rat Surveys* manual to include information about integrated pest management (IPM). The updated manual provides public health, environmental health, and housing professionals with comprehensive information for implementing IPM as a systems approach in the management of pests and vectors.
- A housing-related environmental hazard evaluation manual (the *Healthy Housing Inspection Manual*) is being developed for public health, environmental health, and housing professionals, and others. This new manual will contain risk evaluation worksheets; information about interventions; fact sheets for occupants; and information about potential resources to implement interventions. The *Healthy Housing Inspection Manual* is an adjunct to, and complements, the revised CDC/HUD *Healthy Housing Reference Manual*.
- The National Healthy Homes Training Center and Network (HHTC) has been established. HHTC addresses the training needs of environmental public health practitioners, public health nurses, housing specialists, and others through formal on-site training programs and Web-based instruction and operates through the National Center for Healthy Housing.



For more information about CDC's Healthy Homes Initiative, please contact Deborah Millette at 770-488-4024.

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