



The Healthy Rowhouse project is a coalition of allies in the fields of health, housing, planning and preservation dedicated to improving substandard conditions in rowhouses owned by lower income Philadelphians.

The project began in 2014 as an initiative of the Design Advocacy Group at the Center for Architecture.

HealthyRowhouse.org

The most important affordable home is the one a family is living in now.

OUR GOAL

Improve the health of Philadelphians and preserve affordable housing by creating better conditions in thousands of rowhouses each year.

THE HOUSING CHALLENGE

Philadelphia's stock of rowhouses is an extraordinary asset that allows the city to offer homeownership to more low-income homeowners than virtually any city in the country. Yet these rowhouses are deteriorating faster than their owners can repair them.

- 70%** of all housing units in the city are rowhouses.
- 75%** of these houses are over 50 years old.
- 78%** of Philadelphians over age 60 own their own homes.
- 40%** of all renters live in single-family homes.
- 38%** of owner occupied homes in 2012 were owned by households earning less than \$35,000.

THE HEALTH CHALLENGE

Substandard housing conditions due to deferred maintenance are literally making the people who live in these rowhouses sick. Mold, mildew, and pests create and perpetuate health conditions like asthma in our most vulnerable populations. Poor housing quality is a strong predictor of emotional and behavioral problems in low-income children.

- 40%** of asthma episodes are due to asthma triggers in the home, representing \$5 billion lost annually in preventable medical costs.
- 200%** Asthma hospitalization rates for children have more than doubled since 2000.

THE HOUSING AND HEALTH SOLUTION

Housing policy is health care policy. By repairing homes, dozens of studies have shown that we can dramatically improve the health of the families and individuals living there. At the same time, we can preserve affordable housing that we could never afford to build today.

- \$3500** Average investment made per house by Philadelphia Department of Public Health's 2013-2014 pilot with St. Christopher's Hospital to make home repairs and remove asthma triggers
- CAUSED**
- 70%** Drop in asthma hospitalizations
- 53%** Drop in missed school days

In order to preserve Philadelphia's rowhouses and improve residents' health, the Healthy Rowhouse Project Coalition asks the next Mayor to:

- 1.** Create a bold housing and public health policy for Philadelphia that prioritizes the delivery of improvements to rowhouses affordable to lower income residents.
- 2.** Increase the resources available to lower income property owners to improve occupant health and the viability of their properties and neighborhoods, as well as to ensure a fair balance of public housing dollars between new construction and rehabilitation of existing occupied homes.
- 3.** Establish viable financing mechanisms to bring home repairs and rehabilitation to scale, repairing 5,000 owner- and renter-occupied homes per year. These financing tools will be based upon successful models in other cities and will include deferred loans, due upon sale or transfer of the home, and low-interest loans.
- 4.** Protect tenants' legal rights to healthy living conditions and encourage responsible rental practices through a systematic enforcement approach that promotes investment, rather than displacement.
- 5.** Develop capacity within health care and social service providers to refer residents who are harmed by their housing conditions to resources that can reduce the health hazards within their homes.
- 6.** Evaluate each Healthy Rowhouse Project program for its success in improving the health of occupants and in preserving Philadelphia's rowhouses for future generations.

The following organizations support the Healthy Rowhouse Project:

AIA Philadelphia
Building Industry Association of Philadelphia
Clarifi
Clean Air Council
Community Design Collaborative
Delaware Valley Green Building Council
Department of Architecture + Interiors, Drexel University
Design Advocacy Group
Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia
Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia
Health Federation of Philadelphia
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
LISC Philadelphia
Maternity Care Coalition
National Nursing Centers Consortium
New Kensington CDC
PennFuture
Philadelphia Association of CDC's
Philadelphia Center for Architecture
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging
Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Project Home
Rebuilding Together Philadelphia
ULI Philadelphia
United Community Clinic
University of Pennsylvania Center for Public Health Initiatives
Urban Affairs Coalition

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