



BUILDING A FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTHY HOUSING

Local Housing Code Enforcement and Education

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Background: Codes

- Many state and local jurisdictions enact codes to govern how buildings are designed, built, maintained:
 - Building, Residential, Systems codes prevent future problems during new construction and major rehab
 - Housing (aka Sanitary, Maintenance) codes deal with existing buildings



Housing Code = Important Policy

- Minimum standard of care for properties
 - Compliance should determine if it's rentable
 - Needs periodic updating, diligent advocacy
- Most basic / common HH gaps:
 - Deteriorated paint is already prohibited; need to require safe repair to control lead hazards
 - Relative inattention to moisture and mold
 - Extermination ≠ safe response to infestation
 - Ventilation, safety issues rarely cited



Enforcement is Key

- Good intentions but with hollow ends?
- Don't give up!
 - Good government officials may help
 - Media controversy
 - Government liability for non-enforcement



Issue: Model Codes

- Advantages of using a model code:
 - Policies researched, screened by “experts”
 - Protective as *but not more strict than others*’
 - Therefore palatable for elected officials
- In most cases, local and state policies will only be as protective as model codes
- Mainstream policy for entire housing stock
 - Fulfill public health: population \geq one patient



Reach of model codes

- Property maintenance code
 - 720 localities, AZ, DC, OK, NY, VA
 - Others’ housing codes are similar
 - Standard reference
 - Lowest common denominator
- Existing building code
 - Future developments



AFHH-NCHH Proposals for 2008

- Repair paint safely in pre-78 buildings
 - Deal with underlying cause
- Update pest elimination: stop fogging/spraying, address water source
- CO alarm w/combustion appliance, garage
- Maximum water temperature
- Non-absorbent bathroom floor surface



Advocacy for Model Codes

- International Code Council
 - Membership = code officials (and others)
 - Publishes, updates model codes
 - Resulted from merger of BOCA, the Southern Building Council, et al.
- Key Dates:
 - Sept 20-21 Final Action Hearing, Minn.
 - Mar 24, 2009 New change proposals due



Connecting less-apparent issues

- American Housing Survey: exterior code violations reveal indoor hazards
 - Sloping outside walls can mean rats, holes in the floor, water damage
 - Holes in the floor may also be surrounded by exterior roof, window, siding problems.
 - Check out www.healthyhomestraining.org/ahs.



Exterior evidence: indoor hazards

EXTERIOR PROBLEM	Homes (000s)	ASSOCIATED INTERIOR PROBLEM						
		LEAKS		RODENTS		STRUCTURAL		
		From Interior	From Exterior	Rats	Mice	Cracks in Walls	Holes in Floors	Paint/ plaster
Sagging roof	2,234.8	2.2	3.3	6.7	3.2	5.6	11.7	6.5
Missing roofing material	3,995.6	1.8	2.8	3.9	2.1	3.5	5.9	4.4
Hole in roof	1,973.6	2.4	5.6	5.6	3.2	6.2	10.3	8.5
Sloping outside walls	1,415.8	2.5	2.9	7.4	3.4	6.3	14.0	9.0
Missing bricks, siding, other outside wall material	2,925.1	2.5	2.6	7.1	3.2	5.4	9.7	7.7
Broken windows	3,775.2	2.7	2.3	5.1	3.1	5.0	7.9	6.2
Boarded up windows	1,017.9	2.1	2.0	7.1	3.3	5.2	12.0	6.8
Foundation crumbling or has open crack or hole	2,510.6	2.4	3.3	5.3	3.2	6.3	10.0	6.6



Thanks!

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