



## Health and Housing: Safe Homes Improve Health

### About Enterprise

Enterprise Community Partners is a proven and powerful nonprofit that improves communities and people's lives by making well-designed homes affordable. For over 35 years, we've brought together the nationwide know-how, partners, policy leadership and investments to multiply the impact of local affordable housing development.

Our model creates opportunity for low- and moderate-income families by providing capital to support the construction and preservation of affordable housing in neighborhoods that are accessible to quality schools, jobs, and health care.

By partnering with other organizations and using data-driven analysis, Enterprise ensures that capital, community investments, and technical assistance are tailored to community needs. With work in all 50 states and more than a dozen offices nationwide, Enterprise has the capacity and footprint to influence federal and local policy priorities.

Since 1982, Enterprise has demonstrated its mission to create opportunity by investing a total of \$28.9 billion and financing 380,000 affordable homes nationwide.

**“Without a home, everything else falls apart.”**

In *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, writer and sociologist Matthew Desmond portrays families struggling to survive eviction, homelessness, and housing instability.

### A Healthy Life Starts at Home

Where you live has major repercussions for your health and well-being. Across the country, low-income children and adults suffer disproportionately from chronic health conditions because they live in homes that are poorly constructed and maintained, located in neighborhoods that lack access to health care services and resources.

While homes with mold, lead paint, poor ventilation, and inadequate heating directly harm resident health, the unhealthy tradeoffs that people make just to afford staying in their homes, such as foregoing medicine or healthy food, also have health consequences. Too many people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness struggle with chronic health conditions, often cycling in and out of emergency rooms and missing school or work—conditions that push them further into poverty and further away from better health.



Quality affordable housing is a keystone to lifting families up and out of poverty. With a place to call home, a family has the ability of focus on critical priorities like making routine doctor's visits, maintaining an active lifestyle, and eating nutritious foods. Boston Medical Center pediatrician Megan Sandel, M.D. says that housing is a 'vaccine' for the children she sees and that without it, many of her patients have little hope for healthy futures.

One mechanism for bridging the gap between health care and low-income communities is supportive housing – affordable housing assistance paired with wrap-around services. This intervention has been shown to not only increase housing stability and improve health, but also lower costs by reducing the use of publicly-funded crisis services such as hospitals and psychiatric centers. Recent studies also indicate that that residents who are eligible for rental assistance and receive it are more likely to have health insurance than people who are eligible for rental assistance and do not receive it.

## Spotlight on Cleveland

### Enterprise's Work Improving Health Outcomes in Cuyahoga County

Enterprise leads the Housing First Initiative in Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland to create sufficient permanent supportive housing to end chronic homelessness among chronically homeless single adults, families, and young adults. Since 2006, Housing First has created 710 apartments for single adults and 115 apartments for families in Cuyahoga County, while chronic homelessness has dropped 77 percent.

Chronically homeless individuals have high rates of disease, serious mental illness and addiction. Permanent supportive housing is a proven, evidence-based practice for addressing chronic homelessness and its symptoms. Permanent supportive housing services empower chronically homeless families and adults to regain control over their lives and health in a safe and stable environment.

In 2015, Enterprise and the Housing First Initiative launched a Mobile Health Clinic to meet residents' primary and behavioral health care needs. Since the launch of the Mobile Clinic, the integrated care team has served 330 unique clients and provided over 1,000 medical appointments. Early results show reduced emergency room use and improved resident health.

## Speaking Up for Communities

Given the inextricable link between housing and health, Enterprise is working to foster collaboration between supportive housing and health care providers to ensure the sectors are coordinating in service delivery.

Enterprise's Health and Housing Initiative brings together the fields of health care, affordable housing, and community development. Together, we are developing and testing new models for collaboration and scaling solutions for greater impact to address the significant health needs in low-income communities. This work includes:

- Developing strategies to improve health, housing, and service outcomes for seniors
- Supporting collaboration between housing providers, service providers, and health care communities
- Promoting Housing First and supportive housing to address long-term homelessness among individuals with disabilities
- Convening experts from the health care sector to inform Enterprise's approach to health and housing through our Health Advisory Council.

The need for resources and innovative policy solutions that link health care and housing has grown, but investments in both housing and health care are at risk. Congress needs to hear from all of us on the importance of increasing federal investments that leverage the connection between health and housing. Through concerted advocacy, we can more effectively make the case for investments in programs that work and get to the heart of community challenges.

To learn more about how our organizations can work together, please contact Marion McFadden at [mmcfadden@enterprisecommunity.org](mailto:mmcfadden@enterprisecommunity.org) or Mary Ayala [mayala@enterprisecommunity.org](mailto:mayala@enterprisecommunity.org). Read about Enterprise's work and policy priorities by signing up for our daily newsletter, Community Developments, and bi-weekly rundown of federal policy news, Capitol Express. Follow Enterprise on Twitter [@EnterpriseNow](https://twitter.com/EnterpriseNow) and [@E\\_HousingPolicy](https://twitter.com/E_HousingPolicy).

