

HIV/AIDS HOUSING

Improving Health Outcomes

Incorporate housing interventions as a critical element of HIV health care.

– Policy Imperative from the Housing and HIV/AIDS Research Summit Series



Housing status is one of the strongest predictors of health outcomes for PLWHA: lack of housing is a barrier to care, while increased housing stability enables PLWHA to obtain and adhere to life-saving medical care and antiretroviral therapy.

HOUSING STATUS PREDICTS HIV TREATMENT SUCCESS OR FAILURE

Compared to stably housed PLWHA, **homeless persons experience worse overall physical and mental health**, are more likely to be hospitalized and use emergency rooms, have lower CD4 counts and higher viral loads, and are less likely to receive and adhere to antiretroviral therapy.¹

Housing status is a more significant predictor of health outcomes than individual characteristics such as demographics, drug and alcohol use, and receipt of social services – indicating that housing itself improves the health of PLWHA.²

ACCESS TO HOUSING ENABLES PLWHA TO GET INTO CARE AND STAY IN CARE

Over time, **housing status is among the strongest predictors of entry into HIV care**, primary care visits, continuous care, and care that meets clinical practice standards.³

Receipt of **housing assistance has an independent, direct impact** on improved medical care.⁴

STABLE HOUSING RESULTS IN BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES

An observational study of 676 homeless PLWHA identified through the SF AIDS registry found that over a 5-year period, **obtaining supportive housing was independently associated with an 80% reduction in mortality**.⁵

A random control trial of supportive housing for chronically ill homeless persons showed that **PLWHA who received a housing placement were twice as likely at 12 months to have an undetectable viral load** as those who did not receive housing.⁶

IDU's with stable housing were found to be **1.5 times as likely to access highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART)** than those who lacked housing, and, among those on treatment, those with stable housing were almost **3.7 times as likely to achieve viral suppression**.⁷

Researchers consistently find a **significant positive association between improved housing status and better HIV-related health**, including CD4, viral load, and co-infection with HCV or TB.⁸

THE HOUSING AND HIV/AIDS RESEARCH SUMMIT SERIES

Since 2005, the Housing and HIV/AIDS Research Summit Series has provided a unique forum for presentation and discussion of research findings on the role of housing in HIV prevention and care. Summit IV, held June 3–5, 2009, in Washington DC, was the first North American Summit, convened jointly by the National AIDS Housing Coalition (NAHC) and the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN), working in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Summit IV brought together 200 researchers, policy makers, service providers and people living with HIV/AIDS, representing 24 U.S. states, six Canadian provinces, West Africa and Haiti. For information on the Summit Series and to read Summit materials, visit www.nationalaidshousing.org.



HOUSING IS

The Greatest Unmet Need of Persons with HIV/AIDS

“Taken as a whole, the available research makes it readily apparent that access to adequate housing profoundly affects the health of Americans who are at-risk for or living with HIV.”⁹

The CDC estimates that there are currently 1.2 million people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in the United States, and over 56,000 persons become newly infected each year. AIDS housing experts estimate that about half of all PLWHA—over 500,000 will need some form of housing assistance during the course of their illness.

At current funding levels, the federal Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program serves only about 70,000 households per year.

There is not a single county in the US where a person who relies on federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments (\$674 in 2009) can afford even a studio apartment.



WHAT'S NEEDED

A Data-Driven HIV/AIDS Housing Policy Agenda

- ▶ Make affordable housing available to all persons with HIV.
- ▶ Make housing assistance a top HIV prevention priority.
- ▶ Incorporate housing as a critical element of HIV health care.
- ▶ Continue to collect the data needed to inform HIV housing policy.

1 Kidder, D., Wolitski, R., Campsmith, M., Nakamura, G. (2007). Health status, health care use, medication use, and medication adherence in homeless and housed people living with HIV/AIDS. *American Journal of Public Health* 97(12): 2238-2245.

2 Id.

3 Aidala, A., Lee, G., Abramson, D., Messeri, P. & Siegler, A. (2007). Housing need, housing assistance, and connection to medical care. *AIDS & Behavior*, 11(6)/Supp 2: S101-S115.

4 Id.

5 Schwarcz, S.K., Hsu, L.C., Vittinghoff, E., Vu, A., Bamberger, J.D. and Katz, M.H. (2009). Impact of housing on the survival of people with AIDS. *BMC Public Health*, 9: 220. Full text available electronically at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/9/220>.

6 Buchanan, D.R. MD, Kee, R. MD, MPH, Sadowski, L.S. MD, MPH, and Garcia, D. MPH (2009). The Health Impact of Supportive Housing for HIV-Positive Homeless Patients: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99, No 6: xx-xx, June 2009 E-published ahead of print on April 16, 2009: <http://www.ajph.org/cgi/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2008.137810>

7 Knowlton, A., Arnsten, J., Eldred, L., Wilkinson, J., Gourevitch, M., Shade, S., Dowling, K., Purcell, D., and the INSPIRE Team (2006). Individual, interpersonal, and structural correlates of effective HAART use among urban active injection drug users. *Journal of Acquired Immunodeficiency Diseases*, 41(4): 486-492.

8 Leaver, et al. (2007). The effects of housing status on health-related outcomes in people living with HIV: A systematic review of the literature. *AIDS & Behavior*, 11(6)/Supp 2: S85-S100.

9 Wolitski, R., Kidder, D. & Fenton, F. (2007). "HIV, homelessness, and public health: Critical Issues and a call for increased action." *AIDS & Behavior*, 11(6)/Supp 2: S167-S171.

10 Out of Reach 2007-2008, National Low Income Housing Coalition (www.nlihc.org).



THE NATIONAL AIDS HOUSING COALITION

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