Integrating Health and Planning

Healthy Housing: Forging the Economic and Empirical Link

Dr. Catherine L. Ross : Georgia Planning Association : March 9, 2007
Goals of the Report

1. Identify the economic and empirical links between housing and health

2. Identify the direct and indirect links between housing and health

3. Develop a new conceptual model on the complex effects of housing on health

4. Benchmark the housing and health link for the 13-County Atlanta Region

5. Present recommendations and future research needs

“Housing is one of the main settings that affects human health.”
-WHO
What is Healthy Housing?

It’s not just the building…

A new conceptual model
What is Healthy Housing?

A new conceptual model
The Case for Healthy Housing

FOR THE PUBLIC
this means a healthier and more productive life, improved student performance, more time for family

FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS
this means a stronger workforce that attracts economic development, less cost for healthcare services, and more efficient infrastructure

FOR EMPLOYERS
this means less absenteeism, greater productivity, and less turnover

FOR DEVELOPERS
this means more desirable properties that get approved faster, sell faster, and garner better prices

Healthy Housing

Can help reduce:
- asthma, obesity, stress, arthritis, allergies, injuries, cardiovascular disease, depression, some cancers, and more

Improved Quality of Life
Housing in the Atlanta Region

Substandard Housing by Age of Home

- 1939 or earlier, 2,400 units
- 1940-1959, 8,400 units
- 1960-1979, 23,700 units
- 1980-2004, 27,400 units

Are we building healthy housing?

Housing in the Atlanta Region

Substandard Housing Units as a Percentage of All Occupied Units by County

Where is the substandard housing in the region?

Recommendations

- Build consensus on housing and health
- Conduct studies to examine the housing and health link in the Atlanta region
- Make more explicit the transportation–housing–health link in regional policy
- Create healthy housing
- Include health considerations into urban development and infrastructure development decisions
Recommendations

- Measure impact of potential life lost as a result of health issues

- Measure health circumstances before and after change in the built environment

- Make connections between positive health outcomes and urban form