

## Georgia Healthy Housing Fact Sheet

The home is the most dangerous place for U.S. families.<sup>i</sup> Nearly six million families live in housing rivaling that of developing countries, with broken heating and plumbing, holes in walls and windows, roach and rodent infestation, falling plaster, crumbling foundations, and leaking roofs. Millions more in all 50 states live in housing with serious health and safety hazards, including mold, exposed wiring, radon, unvented heaters, toxic chemicals, broken stairs, missing smoke detectors, and other hazards.<sup>ii</sup> Home-based interventions to address health hazards improve health and have a large return on investment: Each dollar invested in lead paint hazard control results in a return of \$17–\$221,<sup>iii</sup> and each dollar invested in asthma home-based interventions that include education and remediation results in a return of \$5.30 to \$14.00.<sup>iv</sup>

### The need in Georgia:

Thirty-eight percent of children in Georgia live in households with high housing cost burden, and 27% of children in Georgia live in poverty.<sup>v</sup> The potential effect of high housing cost burden and poverty on children and families is exacerbated by the age of Georgia's housing stock: Almost 40% of Georgia homes were built before 1978 (8% are pre-1950) and are likely to contain lead-based paint.<sup>vi</sup> Unhealthy conditions found in hazardous housing can lead to lead poisoning, injuries, and asthma and other respiratory problems, in turn resulting in missed school days and poor school performance for children, as well as missed work days for parents.

### The need for funding

To protect the health of Georgia families and prevent continued increases in associated healthcare costs and societal consequences, full funding in FY 2016 and beyond is needed for the following:

- ✓ **CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program = \$29,257,000**
- ✓ **CDC's National Asthma Control Program = \$30,596,000**
- ✓ **HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes = \$120,000,000**

### Funding for healthy housing in Georgia

- Since 1999, eligible cities, counties, and qualifying nonprofits in Georgia have received eight grants for a total of \$10,534,853 in funding from HUD's Office Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes for lead hazard reduction, healthy homes production, and education and outreach activities. Of this total:
  - \$2.5 million was awarded to the city of Atlanta in 2014.<sup>vii</sup>
- Georgia has received a total of \$6,800,287 in funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention and National Asthma Control programs from FY05 – FY14. Of this funding:
  - Georgia Department of Human Resources has received a total of \$3,515,346 from the Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, most recently in FY14 for \$366,992.
  - Georgia State Department of Public Health has also received a total of \$3,284,941 in funding for asthma-related activities including \$629,232 in FY14.

(cont.)

## **Georgia Healthy Housing Fact Sheet (continued)**

- The Georgia Department of Public Health has been funded by CDC's National Asthma Control Program since 2001.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Childhood lead poisoning**

- In 2011, 5,361 of the children under six years old tested in Georgia had an elevated blood lead level of five micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ) or greater; 778 of them had blood lead levels of 10  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  or more.<sup>ix</sup>
  - 70% of the cases of lead poisoning are Medicaid managed care children.
- These 12 Georgia counties have been identified as "higher risk" for childhood lead exposure: Bibb, Chatham, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, Glynn, Gwinnett, Hall, Richmond, Sumter, Thomas, and Troup.<sup>x</sup>

### **Asthma**<sup>xi, xii, xiii</sup>

- Approximately 9% of Georgia adults and 12% of Georgia children currently have asthma.
  - Black children (18.4%) were significantly more likely to have current asthma than white children (7.8%).
- 2,965 Georgia children under 18 years of age experienced asthma-related hospitalizations in 2010, the direct cost of which amounted to more than \$27.8 million.
- 7,436 Georgia adults experienced asthma related hospitalizations in 2010, the direct cost of which totaled approximately \$146.5 million.

### **Radon**

- Six hundred people die in Georgia each year from radon-related lung cancer.<sup>xiv</sup>
- Most of northern Georgia is identified with moderate to high potential for exposure to radon in homes.<sup>xv</sup>

### **Carbon monoxide deaths**

- There were 196 deaths due to carbon monoxide exposure from 2000 to 2007 in Georgia.<sup>xvi</sup>

### **Injury-related deaths**<sup>xvii</sup>

- Annually in Georgia, there are an average of 2,105 deaths from unintentional injuries, excluding those caused by motor vehicles.
- Fall-related injuries are the leading cause of hospitalizations in Georgia.
- Poisoning and falls are the third and fourth leading causes of injury death in Georgia for all ages, respectively.<sup>xviii</sup>

### **National rankings**

- NCHH's 2013 *State of Healthy Housing* report ranks 45 metropolitan statistical areas according to healthy housing related data in the American Housing Survey. The state of Georgia has one city included in this report. Atlanta was tied for 12th and categorized as having "fair" healthy housing characteristics.<sup>xix</sup>

## Georgia Healthy Housing Fact Sheet (continued)

- The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America’s listing of “Asthma Capitals” for 2014 ranks the 100 largest U.S. metro areas to identify the “most challenging places to live with asthma.” The state of Georgia has two cities identified in this listing: Atlanta is ranked as the 13th “most challenging” place to live with asthma, followed immediately by Augusta in 14th place.<sup>xx</sup>

### Healthcare financing for healthy homes<sup>xxi, xxii</sup>

The National Center for Healthy Housing’s November 2014 [study](#) regarding state Medicaid reimbursement policies for environmental health services in the homes of people with asthma and children exposed to lead shows that in [Georgia](#) no Medicaid reimbursement is in place for activities related to lead, and although none are in place, efforts are underway to explore reimbursement for services related to asthma.<sup>1</sup>

Opportunities for Georgia to improve reimbursement of environmental health services further include:

- Effecting coverage for home-based healthy homes services addressing lead and asthma in the home environment.
- Ensuring that services and supports are included to eliminate or reduce exposure to asthma triggers or lead hazards identified in the home environment.

### For additional information, please contact:

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<sup>1</sup> Note: (a) These are self-reported results that have not been independently verified, and (b) the existence of a policy does NOT mean that services are actually being delivered on the ground.