

## Maine 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 to \$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 Maine

Thirty-six percent of children in Maine live in households with high housing cost burden and just over one in five children in Maine 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 Maine's housing stock. Thirty-two percent of Maine's homes were built in 1939 or earlier and are likely to contain lead-based paint.<sup>vi</sup> These factors make Maine a high housing hazard state. Unhealthy housing conditions can lead to lead poisoning, injuries, and asthma and other respiratory problems. These health problems in turn result in missed school days and poor school performance, as well as missed work days for parents.

### The need for funding

To protect the health of Maine 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 Maine

- Maine has received a total of \$25,768,949 in funding for eleven grants from HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes since the 1999.
  - In fiscal year 2014, the city of Lewiston was the only grantee in the state to receive funding. No grantees were funded in 2013.
- Maine has received a total of \$6,505,334 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:
  - Maine has received a total of \$2,596,353 from the Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.
  - The Maine State Department of Health and Human Services has received a total of \$3,908,981 in funding for asthma-related activities, most recently for \$509,194 in FY14.

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

- The Maine Department of Health and Human Services has been funded by CDC's National Asthma Control Program since 2000.<sup>vii</sup>

### **Indoor air quality**

- Approximately 80 percent of occupied housing units in Maine use “fuel oil, kerosene, etc.” as their principal heating fuel, the highest percentage by state in the country.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Childhood lead poisoning<sup>ix, x</sup>**

- In 2011, 6,940 children under six years old tested in Maine reported elevated blood lead levels over 5 µg/dL.
  - 130 of these children reported elevated blood lead levels above 10 µg/dL.
- In 2010, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program identified the following five areas of the state that account for 40 % of all identified cases of children with an elevated blood lead level: Bangor, Lewiston/Auburn, Portland, Saco/Biddeford, and Sanford.

### **Asthma**

- Maine continues to have a high burden of asthma relative to the rest of the nation.<sup>xi, xii</sup>
  - Approximately 10.3% of Maine adults currently have asthma, compared to 8.5% nationally.
  - In 2008, an estimated 25,629 children in Maine have asthma.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Between 2000 and 2005, the proportion of asthma emergency department visits that had MaineCare (Medicaid) listed as the expected payer increased by roughly 40%.<sup>xiv</sup>
- In Maine, approximately 8,000 emergency room visits and 1,000 hospitalizations occur due to asthma each year, costing approximately \$4.1 million.<sup>xv</sup>

### **Radon**

- An estimated one in three Maine homes has air radon concentrations higher than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's action level. In some areas, such as the Sebago Lake area, as many as two-thirds of homes tested have high levels. In addition, an estimated one-sixth of Maine wells have radon concentrations higher than the recommended amount.<sup>xvi</sup>

### **Carbon monoxide deaths**

- There were 35 deaths in Maine due to carbon monoxide exposure from 2000 to 2007.<sup>xvii</sup>

### **Injury-related deaths**

- For every 100,000 persons in Maine, there were 28.32 unintentional injury deaths caused by dangers other than automobile-related issues.<sup>xviii</sup>

### **Healthcare financing for healthy homes<sup>xix</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

## Maine Healthy Housing Fact Sheet (continued)

children exposed to lead shows that in Maine no Medicaid reimbursement is in place for activities related to lead or asthma; no efforts to explore reimbursement were identified.<sup>1</sup>

Opportunities for Maine to improve reimbursement of environmental health services 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

Julie Kruse, Director of Policy  
National Center for Healthy Housing  
[jkruse@nchh.org](mailto:jkruse@nchh.org), 202.280.1982

- 
- <sup>i</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2007). Injury in the United States: 2007 chartbook. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/misc/injury2007.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> National Center for Healthy Housing. (2013). State of healthy housing. Retrieved from <http://www.nchh.org/Policy/2013StateofHealthyHousing.aspx>
- <sup>iii</sup> Gould, E. (2009, July). Childhood lead poisoning: Conservative estimates of the social and economic benefits of lead hazard control. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 117(7), 1162-1167. Retrieved from [http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/117/7/ehp\\_0800408.pdf](http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/117/7/ehp_0800408.pdf)
- <sup>iv</sup> The Guide to Community Preventive Services (The Community Guide). (2013, September 27). Asthma control. Retrieved from <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/asthma/multicomponent.html>
- <sup>v</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. *2014 kids count data book: Maine state profile*. Retrieved from [http://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2014KC\\_profile\\_ME.pdf](http://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2014KC_profile_ME.pdf)
- <sup>vi</sup> American Community Survey (2004). Percent of housing units that were built in 1939 or earlier by state. Retrieved from [http://www.StateMaster.com/graph/hou\\_per\\_of\\_hou\\_uni\\_tha\\_wer\\_bui\\_in\\_193\\_or\\_ear-units-were-built-1939-earlier](http://www.StateMaster.com/graph/hou_per_of_hou_uni_tha_wer_bui_in_193_or_ear-units-were-built-1939-earlier)
- <sup>vii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014, September 25). Asthma: Maine. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/contacts/me.htm>
- <sup>viii</sup> American Community Survey (2004). Percent of occupied housing units with fuel oil, kerosene, etc. as Principal Heating Fuel by State, American Community Survey 2004. Retrieved from [http://www.StateMaster.com/graph/hou\\_per\\_of\\_occ\\_hou\\_uni\\_wit\\_fue\\_oil\\_ker\\_etc\\_as\\_pri\\_heating-fuel-oil-kerosene-etc-principal-heating](http://www.StateMaster.com/graph/hou_per_of_occ_hou_uni_wit_fue_oil_ker_etc_as_pri_heating-fuel-oil-kerosene-etc-principal-heating)
- <sup>ix</sup> Maine Department of Health and Human Services. (2011). Childhood lead poisoning in Maine: 2010 surveillance report. Retrieved from <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/eohp/lead/documents/2011-lead-surv-update.pdf>
- <sup>x</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Number of children tested and confirmed EBLs by state, year, and BLL group, children < 72 months old. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/data/StateConfirmedByYear1997-2012.htm>
- <sup>xi</sup> Maine Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). *The burden of asthma in Maine 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/mat/documents/2008-asthma-burden-report.pdf>
- <sup>xii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.) Breathing easier in Maine. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/contacts/factsheets/CDC-Asthma\\_ME\\_final.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/contacts/factsheets/CDC-Asthma_ME_final.pdf)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Asthma in Maine. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/stateprofiles/Asthma\\_in\\_ME.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/stateprofiles/Asthma_in_ME.pdf)
- <sup>xiv</sup> Maine Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). *The burden of asthma in Maine 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/mat/documents/2008-asthma-burden-report.pdf>
- <sup>xv</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.) Breathing easier in Maine. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/contacts/factsheets/CDC-Asthma\\_ME\\_final.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/contacts/factsheets/CDC-Asthma_ME_final.pdf)
- <sup>xvi</sup> Maine Department of Health and Human Services. (date unknown). Chapter 3: Environmental health. In *Healthy Maine 2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/healthy-maine/documents/hm2010/a06ch03.pdf>
- <sup>xvii</sup> National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. CDC Environmental Health Tracking Network (2000-2007). Carbon monoxide deaths (#)/multi-year period. Retrieved from <http://ephracking.cdc.gov/QueryPanel/EPHTNQuery/EPHTQuery.html?c=CO&i=-1&m=-1#>
- <sup>xviii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Injury prevention & control: Data & statistics (WISQARS) [Database]: Injury statistics query & reporting system: Composite indicator (excluding estimated 20% of unintentional deaths related to motor vehicles): Unintentional deaths in home/death rate (per 100,000). Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>
- <sup>xix</sup> National Center for Healthy Housing. (2014). 2014 snapshot of healthcare financing for healthy homes in the United States. Retrieved from <http://www.nchh.org/Resources/HealthcareFinancing/Snapshot.aspx>

---

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