Unhealthy conditions found in hazardous housing can lead to lead poisoning, asthma, respiratory illness, cancer, and unintentional injuries, resulting in missed school days and poor school performance for children, as well as missed workdays for parents. The requirement for safe and healthy housing has become even more urgent as people spend more time than ever in residential environments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To protect the health of Rhode Island families and prevent continued increases in associated healthcare costs and societal consequences, full federal funding is needed for critical programs and services.

Full funding to federal programs such as those listed above will help to address many of the risks and burdens facing the residents and families of Rhode Island. For example:

- **CDC’s Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**
- **CDC’s National Asthma Control Program**
- **CDC’s Environmental Health Tracking Network**
- **HUD’s Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes**
- **HUD’s Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**
- **HUD’s HOME Investment Partnerships Program**
- **EPA’s Lead Categorical Grants**
- **EPA’s State Indoor Radon Grants**
- **EPA’s Drinking Water Revolving Fund**
- **HHS’ Maternal and Child Health Block Grants**
- **HHS’ Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**
- **DOE’s Weatherization Assistance Program**

In Rhode Island, 33% of children live in households with a high housing cost burden, and 18% of children live in poverty.

73% of Rhode Island housing was built prior to 1978 (28% before 1940) and is likely to contain lead-based paint.

Asthma emergency department visit rates per 1,000 Rhode Island children in 2013-2017 were **20.5 for black children and 16.5 for Hispanic children compared to 5.9 for white children** (ages 0-4).

Nearly **one in four Rhode Islanders is 65 or older**, and Rhode Island has the **highest proportion of residents 85 and older** in the U.S. (15.8%).

In 2017, **815 Rhode Island children tested had an elevated blood lead level (5 μg/dL or more); 170 of them were 10 μg/dL or higher**. Average blood lead testing activity **fell by 66.5% in the spring of 2020** due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Approximately **12% of adults and 8% children (2018) have current asthma** in Rhode Island.

**$21 million in total hospital charges attributable to asthma hospitalizations** were charged in Rhode Island in 2012.

One in four Rhode Island homes has **elevated levels of radon** in their indoor air. In Exeter and Richmond, **over half** of homes are above the action level.

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February 2021. For **references**, additional **state-specific** healthy homes information, and to learn how you can **engage your members of Congress** on these vital issues, visit: [http://bit.ly/StatePro](http://bit.ly/StatePro)  
Contact: **sgoodwin@nchh.org**