



*Promoting excellence and innovation
in HIV research and care*

Overview

Adequate housing is a fundamental right

Housing status is a key indicator, predictor and determinant of health, not just for people with HIV

A large and growing body of research-based evidence is demonstrating that homelessness and housing instability are intrinsically linked to HIV prevention and treatment

Access to accessible, adequate, affordable housing makes HIV prevention and care efforts more likely to succeed

The HIV/AIDS Epidemic

65,000 people are living with HIV in Canada in 2008

The number of new HIV infections is not decreasing

An estimated 2,300 to 4,300 new HIV infections in 2008

26% of people living with HIV are unaware of their HIV status

Men who have sex with men (MSM) have the highest rate of new HIV infections in Canada

Women, persons from endemic countries and Aboriginal persons are also at high-risk

The number of new HIV infections from injection drug use (IDU) increased to 17% in 2008

The Housing Crisis

Nearly 15% of urban Canadian households were in core housing need in 2005

20.4% of Aboriginal households were in core need in 2006

Accessible Housing: A dwelling designed to allow access for the people who are intended to occupy it including those affected by age, disability or medical condition

Adequate Housing: More than just a sound structure providing shelter. The UN ([General Comment No. 4, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1999](#)) states adequate housing should also consider:

- a) Legal security of tenure
- b) Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure
- c) Affordable
- d) Habitable
- e) Accessibility
- f) Location
- g) Culturally Adequate

Affordable Housing: Does not compromise the ability to meet other basic needs.

PSHP – HIV & Housing

In Ontario, almost half of people living with HIV/AIDS experience housing instability

Instability puts PHAs at risk, having a negative impact on their mental health and quality of life

These issues are more acutely experienced by people living with HIV of Aboriginal, African and Caribbean descent, and by women who had a 15% lower monthly income than men, but 20% higher housing costs than men

HIV and AIDS and housing instability are closely correlated

Housing discrimination is a major concern for people living with HIV in Canada

Affordable, safe, supported, and stable housing can help mitigate the effects of poverty, stigma, and illness.

The Canadian Landscape for Housing Issues

Canada is the only G8 country that does not have a national housing strategy

Funding for supportive and rent/geared-to-income housing varies from province to province

AIDS Service Organizations are working with provincial housing ministries to improve housing options available to people living with HIV

PSHP and other studies are contributing to the body of research evidence



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Why Support A National Housing Initiative?

Building strong bridges between housing and health care sectors is a logical, cost effective measure

Housing supports create stability and community, connect people to care, help mitigate risk factors, and increase the quality of life for people with HIV

Housing status is a key indicator, predictor and determinant of health, not just for people with HIV

Improving housing conditions improves the lives of EVERYONE who needs accessible, adequate affordable housing; including people living with HIV, disability, chronic illnesses, and mental health issues

Health care savings realized by preventing HIV infections and reducing use of crisis care can offset all or part of the cost of housing, making housing assistance a cost-effective HIV prevention and care intervention. In fact, public action to address the unmet housing needs of people with HIV/AIDS costs far less than inaction. (NAHC POLICY PAPER)

Cost effective - Providing accessible, affordable, adequate housing is proven to be more cost effective than trying to manage the acute injury and illness, depravation, exposure, and mental stresses that accompany being homeless (Cisneros, 2007; Shubert & Bernstine, 2007)

Housing News & Events

An Ontario-focused housing and health symposium identified key research priority areas

The Prairie Regional Health and Housing Symposium called for on-going research, engagement of policy and decision-makers, and increasing cooperation across sectors

In Quebec, COCQ-SIDA and the Canadian AIDS Society are planning a research initiative bringing together universities, community researchers, housing providers and AIDS service organizations

In 2009 and 2001, M.P. Libby Davies introduced a Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons advocating a national housing strategy: [Bill C-304, A Secure, Adequate, Accessible and Affordable Housing Act](#)

The Bill calls for access to accessible, affordable, adequate housing for all Canadians

As a Private Members Bill, Bill C-304 is mostly viewed as setting a tone; it is very unlikely it will become law

Private-public partnerships should be explored in greater depth

Taking Action In Canada

The Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada is a key element of the Government of Canada's comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS. The Federal Initiative provides funding for prevention and support programs reaching vulnerable populations, as well as research, surveillance, public awareness, and evaluation. The goals of the Federal Initiative are to:

1. Prevent the acquisition and transmission of new infections;
2. Slow the progression of the disease and improve quality of life;
3. Reduce the social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS; and
4. Contribute to the global effort to reduce the spread of HIV and mitigate the impact of the disease.

(<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/aids-sida/fi-if/index-eng.php>)

To meet these goals, the federal government must develop a national housing policy that recognizes the link between housing and HIV.

The federal government must stop downloading responsibility to provinces, municipalities and ASOs.



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ASOs can facilitate the effort by:

- Making housing needs part of case management
- Inquiring about and tracking housing stability and affordability
- Using peers and volunteers to maintaining frequent contact with their clients
- Advocating for accessible, adequate, affordable housing
- Developing formal partnerships with local housing providers and LHINs to inform and engage