



The North American  
Housing & HIV/AIDS  
Research Summit Series

# HOUSING IS HIV PREVENTION

Since 2005, the Summit Series has provided an innovative forum to present research on the relationship between housing and HIV prevention and care, and to discuss the policy implications of the research findings. Researchers, policy makers, providers and consumers work together to develop evidence-based public policy goals and strategies.

The Summit Series is convened by U.S. National AIDS Housing Coalition (NAHC) and the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN), working in collaboration with and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Summit VI will be held **September 21-23, 2011** in New Orleans, LA

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## Housing assistance is a powerful way to prevent the spread of HIV.

People who have stable housing are less likely to acquire HIV infection or to transmit HIV infection to others -- regardless of other risks.

HIV prevention strategies will not succeed without attention to housing and other structural factors.<sup>1</sup>

## Housing instability is a barrier to reducing HIV risk:

- People coping with homelessness and housing instability face enormous day-to-day challenges that affect their ability to reduce HIV risk.<sup>2</sup>
- Being unstably housed is associated with increased risk behavior and higher HIV infection rates – after controlling for substance use, mental health issues, access to services, and other factors that contribute to risk.<sup>3</sup>
- Counseling, needle exchange, and other proven HIV prevention interventions are less effective at reducing HIV risk among people who are homeless or unstably housed.<sup>4</sup>

## Housing status predicts HIV risk:

- People living with HIV/AIDS who are homeless or unstably housed are 2 to 6 times more likely to have recently used hard drugs, shared needles or engaged in high-risk sex.<sup>5</sup>
- Homeless women were as much as 5 times more likely to report drug use and sexual risk behaviors -- in part due to victimization by physical violence.<sup>6</sup>
- On the other hand, at-risk youth who had stable housing were significantly more likely to use condoms and less likely to have multiple sex partners.<sup>7</sup>

## Housing assistance is HIV prevention:

- People with HIV/AIDS who are homeless or unstably housed who receive housing assistance are more likely to engage in medical care, reduce risk behaviors and enjoy better health.<sup>8</sup>
- When their housing situation improved, people living with HIV/AIDS reduced their drug related and sexual risk behaviors by as much as half, while those whose housing status worsened increased risky behaviors.<sup>9</sup>
- People with HIV who have access to stable housing are more likely to receive and adhere to antiretroviral medications, which lower viral load and reduce the risk of HIV transmission.<sup>10</sup>

# HOUSING IS THE GREATEST UNMET NEED OF AMERICANS LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

*“The available research makes it readily apparent that access to adequate housing profoundly affects the health of Americans who are at-risk for or living with HIV.”<sup>11</sup>*

**1.1** MILLION The number of persons currently living with HIV/AIDS in the United States, with 56,000 newly infected each year.<sup>12</sup>

The number of households currently served by the federal Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. **Less than**

**60,000**

**500,000**

The number of Americans living with HIV who will need some form of housing assistance during the course of their illness.

**More than 140,000** The number of households with HIV in the U.S. that currently lack stable housing and have an unmet need for housing assistance.<sup>13</sup>

## What's needed: Evidence-based HIV/AIDS housing policy



- Make safe, affordable housing available to all people living with HIV
- Make housing assistance a top HIV prevention priority
- Include housing as a key component of HIV health care
- Continue to collect the data needed to inform HIV housing policy

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