



Conclusion and policy recommendations

Chapter 8

Government decision makers, health ministers, aid groups and funding organizations whose efforts have sheltered millions of people in need now must change their approach to build not only safe dwellings but also healthier communities. To have long-term impact on global health, interventions that combine health and housing are essential. Addressing the issue of adequate housing and healthy communities together is key in any successful health-focused strategy.

Toward that end, we make the following recommendations.



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Habitat for Humanity on health and housing:

- Efforts to address global health must reach beyond the typical health-related expenditures to address the core issues that cause health problems to arise in the first place.
- Education efforts should be developed to help individuals and local and national governments understand the effect of unhealthy homes on a community's health. This should include more research and funding to further investigate housing costs, the health benefits of improved housing, and the effectiveness of improved housing in making neighborhoods more sustainable and stable.
- Government programs and nongovernmental organizations should be coordinated and should develop holistic approaches to housing and community health in developing countries as well as in those hit by natural disasters.
- Because rapid urbanization will continue around the globe, support for more research and programs to understand this phenomenon in relation to health and housing is incredibly vital.

Habitat for Humanity urges the U.S. government to recognize the link between health and housing around the world.

- Congress should hold House and Senate hearings with experts from nongovernmental organizations and other groups who have worked directly on health and housing programs to increase the awareness of members of Congress and the public and to explore how Congress can address the issue.
- U.S. foreign assistance entities should commit resources to document the role played by inadequate housing in overall community health and to highlight the best solutions developed to date.
- The Millennium Challenge Corporation, which is recognized for developing holistic compacts, should encourage programs that link the issues of health and housing.
- The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief should develop standard guidelines for shelter interventions for orphaned and vulnerable children programs that meet minimum shelter standards and commit the necessary resources to address the issue.
- The United States Agency for International Development should encourage the development of health programs to look at holistic outcomes, rather than specific outputs, which would allow for innovative programming, including those that could use home improvements to improve health outcomes.
- Disaster response should include long-term planning for resilient housing.