



HEALTHY HOUSING COLLABORATIVE 2008 ACTIVITIES REPORT

Our vision: All Rhode Islanders have a right to housing that supports their growth, development, and physical and mental health, and provides the opportunity to achieve a positive quality of life throughout the entire lifespan.

This document contains a brief summary of the activities conducted by members of the Healthy Housing Collaborative during 2008. Special thanks to members of the Collaborative who provide ongoing support, input, ideas and time to promote healthy housing in Rhode Island. The work detailed here would not have been possible without their support.

Milestones of the year

1. A PowerPoint presentation on the concept of healthy housing and healthy communities was prepared and is now available for members to use. Its purpose is to inform potential partners in RI about what healthy housing is and help them identify what role they play or could play.
2. The Building Commissioner's Office aligned the requirements for minimum housing codes for all cities and towns, following the model of building codes. The new state codes were effective July 1, 2008.
3. A Refugee Housing workgroup completed a report that summarized the problems and issues surrounding unhealthy living conditions for refugees. The report included findings about refugee housing conditions and gave recommendations to the International Institute on how they can improve identifying safe housing for their refugee clients. At a follow-up meeting state and community based agencies agreed to work together to ensure that all refugees will have access to healthy housing.
4. The first Rhode Island Healthy Housing Conference took place on May 1, and the first edition of the Healthy Housing databook was issued as well.
5. The Rhode Island Department of Health partnered with Grow Smart RI to hold the "Power of Place" summit on May 2, and also brought the Executive Director of the Alliance for Healthy Homes as a plenary speaker for the Summit.
6. Copies of the "Don't Spread Lead" DVD made by the New England Lead Coordinating Committee were made available in Rhode Island. It explains how to do renovations safely and can be requested by calling 1-800-942-7434. The video is available in English and Spanish.
7. RI Housing, in conjunction with Ellen Tohn, developed a one-hour healthy housing presentation and was presented to residents in Newport and Jamestown in March and in East Providence in April. RI Housing is making this presentation available to any interested parties and encourages groups to use it given its success and interest in healthy housing that it generated.
8. Brown University began a Healthy Communities Scholars Program through which students can work on research projects related to healthy communities. The Healthy Homes and Environment Team and others were asked to propose project ideas for the scholars.
9. HRC is involved in the efforts to help tenants affected by foreclosures, providing information and referral and advocating for notice to tenants when the property is in foreclosure proceedings.
10. HRC launched a searchable web site where the public can find properties that have received a Certificate of Conformance in compliance with the Lead Hazard Mitigation Law.

11. The Department of Health provided radon test kits to community partners and organizations interested in promoting the prevention of radon exposure in the Environmental Justice Areas that they serve.
12. A workgroup volunteered to prepare an application to CDC for conducting two summits. The application was submitted but unfortunately not awarded.
13. A Hasbro Children's Hospital Pediatric Grand Rounds and Panel Discussion on asthma and the indoor environment took place on June 13th.
14. The Lead Program at RI Housing incorporated principles of healthy housing into their efforts by providing radon kits and CO detectors, revamping the lead-safe training to include more hands-on teaching, including Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and working with weatherization for funding lead cases.
15. The Healthy Kids Collaborative issued an RFP for lead remediation in 600 units. The Attorney General announced that the RFP was awarded to CLEAR Corp on December 17, 2008.
16. The Lead Program from the Department of Health began working with storytellers Len Cabral and Marc Levitt to develop a Healthy Homes DVD for school aged children. A Providence public school involved in a prior environmental effort will also be involved in piloting the story and developing a project.
17. Fire Departments and EMTs were invited to participate in a carbon monoxide (CO) Workshop to develop a strategy to assess CO issues. The workgroup developed a protocol for EMT, ER, and Fire Departments to provide a unified response to CO. The Department of Health also revised regulations and a form to report high levels of CO.
18. The Department of Health was approached to see if there is interest in partnering with the Apeiron Institute, American Institution of Architects-Committee on the Environment, RI High Performance Schools Group, and the US Green Building Council – RI Chapter on a 'Green Building Summit' for March 2009. The goal of the Summit is to network with others in the state who have common goals on 'green' building (housing, worksites, schools) and find opportunities to partner and work together. The Collaborative agreed to engage in a dialogue with the groups and assess the feasibility of the project
19. The RI Department of Health's Healthy Housing Steering Committee asked for input from the leadership of the Division of Community, Family Health and Equity in the Spring and put together its 5-year workplan in December.
20. The environmental risks that have been collected for over two years by the Family Outreach Program at the home visits offered to the risk positive newborns are being analyzed. The form is also being revised to improve data collection.
21. After contacting programs piloting healthy housing projects, the Lead Program began work on the design of a quick checklist that can be used by individuals offering services to families in their own homes, such as inspectors, case managers, weatherization services, etc.
22. St. Joseph's Hospital received CATCH funding for the development of protocols to begin the work on the implementation of the feasibility study to expand Lead Centers to include asthma interventions. A proposal for additional funding was submitted to CDC later in the year and was not awarded. The group will continue to look for funding opportunities in the future.
23. Partnership with Brown University was formed to determine if properties eligible for an inspection that are abated have fewer lead poisoned children in the future than properties eligible for an inspection that are NOT abated.
24. Launched the "healthy housing educational materials" order form, which includes topics such as bed bugs, carbon monoxide, radon, mold, and mercury. Materials can be ordered online, visiting our website at www.health.ri.gov.