



Addressing Housing Affordability and Health

Kaiser Permanente's approach

Safe, stable housing is essential to a person's health. Kaiser Permanente is supporting efforts to end homelessness and expand access to affordable housing by making impact investments, catalyzing innovation through partnerships, and shaping public policy.

Impact Investments

Kaiser Permanente has committed to invest up to \$200 million in affordable housing through its Thriving Communities Fund, with up to \$100 million committed so far through two sub-funds.

- The **RxHome Fund** provides \$100 million in low-cost, long-term loans to create and preserve multifamily rental homes for low-income residents throughout Kaiser Permanente's service areas. Created in partnership with Enterprise Community Partners, a nonprofit affordable housing developer, Kaiser Permanente contributed \$50 million and Enterprise contributed \$50 million.
- The **Housing for Health Fund** plans to raise at least \$85 million to provide equity capital for preserving affordable housing in the San Francisco Bay Area. Kaiser Permanente invested \$15 million to launch the fund and will match up to \$35 million of additional capital through co-investment with other partners. The fund will purchase affordable multi-unit housing and protect residents from rent increases. Enterprise Community Partners will support a health action plan process to identify health priorities for these properties, based on data analysis and community engagement, and incorporate this into project design and implementation.

Strategic Partnerships

Kaiser Permanente is contracting with many national and local nonprofits to support affordable housing.

- Kaiser Permanente is contracting with the national nonprofit Community Solutions on the **Built for Zero** Initiative to accelerate the end of homelessness in 25 communities in California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. The initiative uses problem-solving tools and technologies to help local leaders better understand local homelessness and collaborate to create community-driven solutions.
- In partnership with city, county, and nonprofit leaders, Kaiser Permanente is contracting with a homeless service provider, **Bay Area Community Services**, to provide stable housing and supportive services to more than 500 seniors with chronic medical conditions in Oakland, California.

Public Policy

Kaiser Permanente is addressing affordable housing through public policy.

- As a founding member of the **Healthcare Anchor Network**, Kaiser Permanente has joined with other health care leaders to highlight the need for expanded federal support for affordable housing.
- As a member of **Mayors and CEOs for U.S. Housing Investment** – a project of the National League of Cities – Kaiser Permanente is promoting federal affordable housing reforms and opposing cuts to affordable housing.
- **CityHealth**, an initiative of Kaiser Permanente and the de Beaumont Foundation, is promoting inclusionary zoning policies that require or provide incentives for developers to include a minimum amount of lower-income housing in new market-rate developments.
- In Maryland, as a new light rail corridor (the Purple Line) is developed, Kaiser Permanente is convening health sector stakeholders to **catalyze affordable housing projects** and prevent displacement of existing residents.
- Kaiser Permanente supported a **\$4 billion California housing bond**, approved by voters in 2018, that will create new affordable housing and provide low-interest housing loans to veterans.

Why Kaiser Permanente is taking action

Safe, stable housing is essential to a person's health. Communities across the United States face a growing housing affordability crisis.

- Rental costs are rising faster than incomes.
- For every 100 extremely low-income renters, urban areas have only 42 available and affordable units, and rural areas have only 69 units.²

Lack of affordable housing affects public and individual health.



High housing costs can force people to cut back on food and medical care. A survey found that low-income families in unstable housing situations were more likely to cut back on meals and postpone needed medical care than low-income families in stable housing.³



Lack of affordable housing can force people to live in poor-quality housing. Lead exposure, poor ventilation, and other substandard housing conditions have been linked to health problems, and overcrowding can have detrimental health effects. High housing prices also may force people to relocate to areas requiring long commutes and areas with limited access to grocery stores, public parks, and other health-supporting amenities.⁴

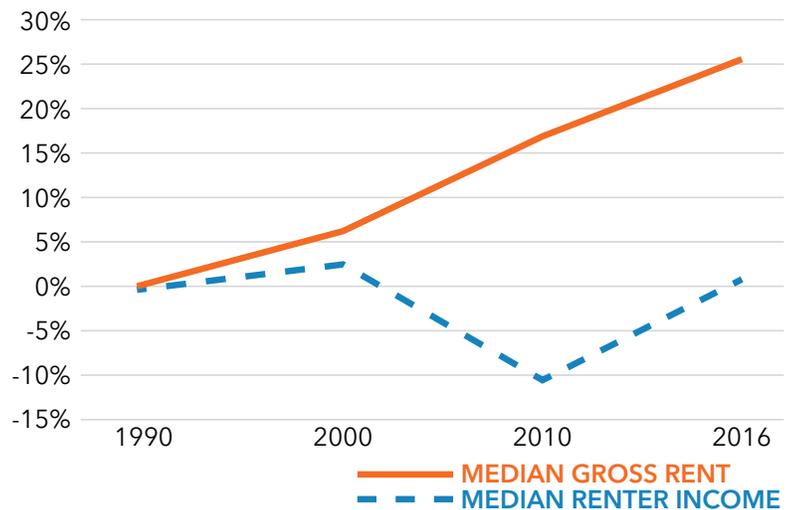


Finding affordable housing sometimes requires multiple moves, as rental costs increase. Housing instability increases the risk of fair or poor health among caregivers and children, and the risks of teen pregnancy, early drug use, low school achievement, and depression in youth.⁵



Lack of affordable housing is linked to homelessness. A survey of city government officials found that a lack of affordable housing was the most frequently mentioned cause of homelessness.⁶ Homeless people face more health challenges and are more frequently hospitalized.⁷ Older homeless people, who make up an increasing proportion of the total homeless population, experience accelerated aging. They have disproportionately high rates of chronic illness and die at younger ages than the general population.⁸

Percent Change in Real Median Renter Income and Rents Since 1990¹



References

1. Chart developed by Enterprise Community Partners, a national nonprofit organization focused on affordable housing, based on U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and American Community Survey data, adjusted for inflation by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for All Items (Income) and All Items Less Shelter (Rents).
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4. Lauren Taylor, "Housing and Health: An Overview of the Literature," *Health Affairs Health Policy Brief*, June 7, 2018; Jeffrey Lubell et al., "Housing and Health: New Opportunities for Dialogue and Action," *National Center for Healthy Housing*, June 2017.
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7. Sandel, M., et al., "Compounding Stress: The Timing and Duration Effects of Homelessness on Children's Health," Insights from Housing Policy Research, Center for Housing Policy and Children's HealthWatch, June 2015, childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/Compounding-Stress_2015.pdf; Lauren Taylor, "Housing and Health: An Overview of the Literature," *Health Affairs Health Policy Brief*, June 7, 2018.
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