



Green & Healthy Homes Initiative®

VOLUME V, ISSUE I

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HEALTHY HOMES, HAPPY FAMILIES

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A Note from Our President & CEO

Twenty-five years ago, I joined the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning in its mission to eradicate lead poisoning in Baltimore. Together with parents, community advocates and civic leaders we set our sights on ending the toxic legacy of lead poisoning in our community and reduced lead poisoning in Baltimore by 99 percent. However, we still have much work ahead, not just in Maryland but throughout our nation, to combat the ills caused by unhealthy housing conditions.

In 2009, we changed our name to the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative to reflect our broader mission. Today, our organization has supported efforts in all 50 states as well as over 60 cities. We have supported the efforts of 25 health care systems and have forged partnerships with over 4,000 nonprofit and for-profit organizations focused on creating healthier homes to improve health, economic and social outcomes for our most vulnerable populations. It has been and remains, my distinct honor to work with a brilliant, talented and visionary staff. I have been awed by the acts and leadership of community organizations and leaders across the country. I am more assured today that we will change the course of health and housing in America.

Since our last publication, GHHI has been focused primarily on directing the National Lead Campaign, working on innovative health care financing at the federal and local level and supporting continued adoption of the GHHI model in jurisdictions throughout the country. GHHI launched a National Lead Campaign to ignite a national commitment to eradicate lead in late 2016. The Campaign kicked off GHHI's *Strategic Plan to End Childhood Lead Poisoning — A Blueprint for Action* and a National Lead Summit attended by representatives of over 250 partner organizations in Washington, DC. Since then, GHHI has worked to support recent lead poisoning prevention policy successes, including increases in federal funding.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

GHHI is advancing the business case nationally for health care financing of lead safe and healthy housing that will benefit all stakeholders across the country. New prevention tools are emerging in health care sector financing that several states are already utilizing. The Centers for Medicaid Services and Medicaid/CHIP state offices have approved lead inspections and lead hazard control interventions as a covered service in the homes of EBL children on Medicaid/CHIP in a number of states including: Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio and Rhode Island. GHHI is also advocating for expanded Medicaid funded healthy homes services, such as asthma in-home resident

education, environmental assessment and trigger reduction interventions that have been approved in Maryland, Missouri and Oregon.

GHHI SITE SCALING AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

GHHI continues to advance our integrated model with new jurisdictions who have formed local Learning Networks, are implementing systems change models and are making great progress in improving client service delivery by integrating health, energy and housing services. GHHI has welcomed new designated sites in Albany, NY; Marin County, CA; Memphis/Shelby County, TN; Pittsburgh, PA; Schenectady, NY; and Troy, NY. Richmond, VA, and Toledo, OH, are planned for site designation in the near future.

In addition, GHHI is serving as a member of the Project Leadership team for the Maternal and Child Environmental Health Network (MCEH) Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Project (COIIN). We are excited to supplement their work as they look to improve lead prevention efforts in states across the country, and to learn from best practices brought to the table by other organizations nationally.

ACEEE AWARD

We were awarded a Health and Energy Linked Programs (HELP) award from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) for overall excellence in our work addressing the connection between unhealthy housing and occupant health through education and energy efficiency. We are honored by the recognition, and continuously driven by our knowledge that energy-efficiency and whole-home improvement is central to our organizational mission goals.

Finally, GHHI is thrilled to be a presenting sponsor at the National Healthy Homes Conference this year in Anaheim, CA, in partnership with HUD and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA). Later this summer, we will convene our growing cohort of GHHI sites (39 and counting) in Salt Lake City, UT, along with key partners, experts and thought leaders at our annual Executive Leadership Institute.



Thank you for all you do to advance the mission of healthy homes, and I hope you enjoy the magazine. ■



Ruth Ann Norton

Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

CREATING HEALTHY, SAFE AND ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES FOR ALL

30 million American families live in unhealthy, unsafe, inefficient homes that directly undermine their quality of life and ability to meet their full potential. When homes do not meet basic health and safety standards, it costs taxpayers **billions of dollars** annually in preventable housing-related health care costs for asthma, lead poisoning and injury, as well as missed work days for parents and missed school days for children.

30 million 

100 billion 

At Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI), we have been working for more than 25 years to stabilize families and communities by reducing lead poisoning, asthma related hospitalizations and housing related injuries. We connect families in low- to moderate-income households with quick and effective home repairs. We build collaborative partnerships with nonprofits and local government to coordinate service delivery to ensure everyone has a healthy, safe and energy efficient home.

Services

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

GHHI provides technical assistance to nonprofits and government agencies to coordinate service delivery, create more efficient systems and produce cost savings.

We work with cities to:

- Design integrated service delivery systems
- Create strategic site development work plans
- Analyze assets and gaps in funding and housing services
- Develop plans to address any resource gaps, including innovative financing plans
- Develop legislative policy recommendations and action plans
- Customize training, including cross training for home assessors, and technical assistance

POLICY & INNOVATION

GHHI's policy and innovation team helps organizations explore and develop models that leverage private capital to fund public health interventions based on outcomes they produce. Through our support, organizations can assess the value of different models, including Pay for Success financing, direct performance-based contracting and hybrid approaches to scale interventions that work. We customize all technical support engagements according to clients' needs.

The main categories of technical assistance support through our policy and innovation team are:

- Feasibility assessment – we explore the feasibility of sustainably-funded health, housing and energy programs and financing options, and engage in innovative policy research
- Capacity building and pilot design – we work with organizations to promote promising programs that improve home-based health.
- Innovative finance structuring – we work with programs that are improving health outcomes to create innovative financing models

MARYLAND DIRECT SERVICES

In our hometown of Baltimore, GHHI provides a comprehensive set of direct services for low-income families, property owners, tenants, health care providers and other stakeholders. We help to create safe, energy-efficient and healthy home environments through:

- Case Management Services
 - Work with families to navigate various agencies and programs to receive the services they need
 - Provide in home health and safety education

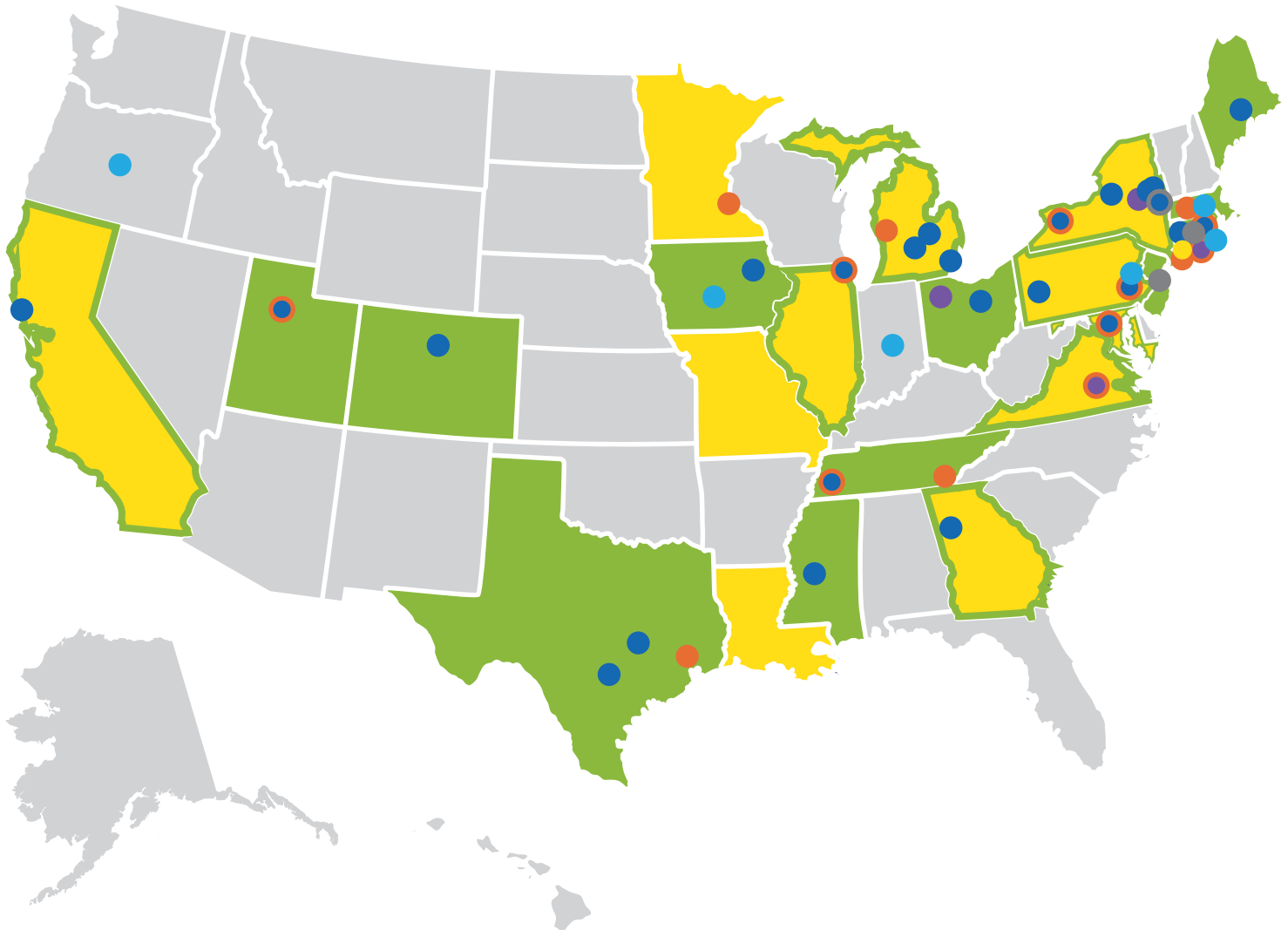
- Legal and mediation services
 - Represent individuals and families in court to assure rental property owners comply with local and state laws to maintain healthy and safe housing
 - Work with government agencies to implement best practices
 - Provide comprehensive compliance assistance to property owners
- Comprehensive home assessments
 - One of our certified home auditors will conduct a full-home environmental assessment and energy audit
 - Our team will install safety and maintenance kit (including smoke and carbon monoxide detectors)
- Environmental and Safety Home Interventions

Our team, which is fully certified and accredited for federal, state, and local requirements, provides the following evidence-based intervention services:

 - EPA and state certified lead hazard control
 - Reduction of asthma triggers
 - Integrated pest management
 - Remediation of mold hazards
 - Energy efficiency upgrades
 - Weatherization services
 - Housing upgrades to benefit seniors
 - General fall prevention and safety measures
 - Indoor air quality improvements
- Community outreach, education and trainings for families, pregnant women, seniors, children, certified contractors and DIY renovators



GHHI Map / List of Sites



- Designated GHHI Site
- Onboarding GHHI Site
- Social Innovation
- State Strategic Plans
- EEFA Partner Sites
- GHHI State
- EPA Projects

CURRENTLY, GHHI WORKS IN:

Albany, NY
 Atlanta, GA
 Austin, TX
 Baltimore, MD
 Buffalo, NY
 Chattanooga, TN
 Chicago, IL
 Cleveland, OH
 Denver, CO
 Des Moines, IA
 Detroit-Wayne County, MI
 Dubuque, IA
 Flint, MI
 Grand Rapids, MI

Greater Syracuse, NY
 Houston, TX
 Jackson, MS
 Lansing, MI
 Lewiston-Auburn, ME
 Marin County, CA
 Memphis-Shelby County, TN
 Minneapolis, MN
 New Haven, CT
 New York City, NY
 Philadelphia, PA
 Pittsburgh, PA
 Providence, RI
 Richmond, VA

Salt Lake, UT
 San Antonio, TX
 Schenectady, NY
 South Bend, IN
 Springfield, MA
 Toledo, OH
 Troy, NY
 Utica-Oneida County, NY
 Worcester, MA

Benton County, Lincoln County, Linn County, OR

The States of Connecticut, Indiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island



The Sajecki Family

Lead poisoning prevention: Empowering parents and owners to be prevention partners

Most parents desire to have a clean, safe, and healthy home for their family, but in Baltimore City, Maryland, a family's zip code, or residential street can mean the difference between raising children in a healthy environment or a toxic space. A healthy environment might mean different things to different families – living in a neighborhood close to parks and play spaces or having access to markets with healthy food. Despite the reason, all families should be living in a home free of lead hazards.

Christine Sajecki and her husband live in a neighborhood in Baltimore that historically housed workers for the nearby cotton mills. Built in 1877, the house was an eye-catcher for the two creatives who were attracted to the oddities and elements of a bygone era.

They weren't, however, aware that their home posed a health threat to their baby. Around his first birthday, the Sajeckis' son was diagnosed with an elevated blood lead level of six (6) $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ by the pediatrician at his annual physical. Christine sought help from the local government programs before she was introduced to Green & Healthy Homes Initiative who came to her family's rescue.

Christine admitted it was a little scary and intimidating to first learn about her son being sick, and she was nervous going into the program to receive assistance. "You worry about what happens when your child tests positive for lead," she said.

GHHI found that the source of the lead was the paint on the home's exterior and on the attached studio that Christine used for her artwork. The paint at the bottom of the structure was flaking off and the family was tracking the lead-based paint and dust into the house every time they walked inside.



Making an historic house safe for a modern family.

“My experience is that it’s hard to find people you can trust, and it can be prohibitively expensive hiring people. The fact that GHHI just showed up and did the work needed on our house is a miracle.”

Christine wasn’t aware of the problems with her home until her son was diagnosed, but she was very thankful for GHHI and the work they were able to facilitate. GHHI replaced the windowsills in the living room and upstairs, repainted the door jams and doors, and addressed the areas for lead remediation. “My experience is that it’s hard to find people you can trust, and it can be prohibitively expensive hiring people. The fact that GHHI just showed up and did the work needed on our house is a miracle,” said Christine.

GHHI also educated Christine with tips for taking care of her home safely and information on how lead can affect a child’s development, the importance of HEPA-vacuuming instead of sweeping, and why it’s better to use wet cleaning, such as mopping, which has reduced lead dust and contributed to a healthier environment for her son.

Due to GHHI’s services and support, Christine’s son’s lead level was significantly reduced as of his second birthday.

“Lead poisoning is a huge deal and a permanent problem. It can affect my son for the rest of his life. Kids can’t feel the immediate effects, but their growth can be affected; their cognitive development. It’s a huge, huge relief to have had everything taken care of,” Christine said. “It’s been a huge blessing.” ■

Energy Efficiency Can Help Address Childhood Asthma

**As published by ACEEE.*

In Baltimore, where summers are hot and winters cold, Keyona Ball had a problem with her house. Some rooms were really hot and others stayed cold. Her seven-year old son suffers from asthma, and weather extremes—whether hot and humid or cold and dry—can trigger his attacks. After her home was weatherized, she found that better insulation and air sealing improved the situation. “The heat is more consistent throughout the house,” she said. “I did notice this past winter that he didn’t have to have as many breathing treatments.”

Nikia Pickett, another Baltimore mom whose young son has asthma, tells a similar story. She learned from a weatherization program that poor air sealing was allowing allergens and other outdoor air contaminants into her home. With proper sealing, she said, “We went from him having an asthma attack once every four to six weeks to twice this year.”

These women are dealing with a serious and increasingly common illness. More than six million U.S. children have asthma. Children are particularly vulnerable, because they have smaller airways than adults. Asthma attacks can be fatal so proactively addressing the illness is crucial.

Energy efficiency improvements can help. Installing insulation and sealing gaps or holes can reduce a home’s indoor humidity, cold drafts, air pollutants, and allergens such as mold—all asthma triggers.

These triggers can result in a trip to the emergency room or even a hospital admission. Asthma can’t be cured, but it can be controlled. While there is no substitute for the care of a physician and prescription medications, preventive actions such as installing weather stripping or replacing leaky windows can reduce the incidence of asthma attacks.

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) in Baltimore is one of several programs in the United States doing this kind of work. In March, ACEEE detailed similar programs nationwide in a report, *The Next Nexus: Exemplary Programs That Save Energy and Improve Health*. Additionally, ACEEE will host the Conference on Health, Environment & Energy (CHEE) in New Orleans in December to explore how energy choices can affect our health and the environment.

To watch the video and to learn more, please visit: <https://aceee.org/blog/2018/01/energy-efficiency-can-help-address>.



Healthy Homes, Healthier Communities

Advancing the role of health care and government to scale Healthy Houses

In the ongoing debate around health care in the United States, one thing is indisputable: that social determinants of health, starting with people's homes, have a major impact on health outcomes. Whether it is removing mold from an asthmatic's home, installing grab bars to make a residence safer for an older adult to age in place, or improving indoor air quality for someone with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, health care professionals understand the value of a healthy home more now than ever before.

Through consistent advocacy, several policy objectives in the National Lead Campaign have been achieved and the federal budgets for lead hazard remediation, inspection and case management have been increased substantially in the past two years to support lead prevention strategies. The Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy

Homes (OLHCHH) at the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development is funded at the highest level in its history. OLHCHH's budget increased from \$110 million in FY2016 to \$145 million in FY2017 and then was enlarged to \$230 million in FY2018. \$45 million of those funds have also been allotted to healthy homes for improving the health and safety of homes beyond addressing lead hazards. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program more than doubled its funding in the 2018 Omnibus to \$35 million. In July 2017, amendments to the Lead Safe Housing Rule went into effect that lowered the blood lead action level for federally assisted housing to 5 µg/dl and also enhanced requirements for preventive lead risk assessments in other units in multi-family complexes where a lead poisoned child has been identified. Lastly, Illinois, New Hampshire, and New Jersey more recently joined the list of states who have lowered their action level to 5 µg/dl for environmental investigation and medical case management to align with the CDC's Recommendations.

The CDC National Center for Environmental Health also released last year, "Pay for Success: A how-to guide for local government focused on lead safe homes." This followed the GHHI publication, "Pay for Success for Lead Poisoning Prevention." The Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air and Radiation, Indoor Environments Division (IED) continued the National Indoor Environments Program: Reducing Public Exposure to Indoor Pollutants, and GHHI is a proud awardee of this program.

This momentum also exists at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and state Medicaid and CHIP programs. In 2016, CMS approved a Missouri Medicaid state plan amendment that enables Medicaid reimbursement for home visiting for asthma education and environmental assessments of asthma triggers. That same year, CMS approved a Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Health Service Initiative (HSI) state plan amendment submitted by Michigan Medicaid that included funding of \$119 million over five years for abatement of lead hazards. CMS released a memorandum stating that allowable activities under an HSI include the removal or enclosure of lead-based paint and lead dust hazards; the removal and replacement of surfaces or fixtures identified as lead hazards; the removal or covering of soil lead hazards; and training for contractors to perform the work. Maryland followed in 2017 with a similar HSI to launch a \$7.2 million initiative to address childhood lead

poisoning and asthma. Indiana and Ohio have also used HSIs for lead prevention initiatives.

GHHI currently has over twenty projects around the country that are partnerships between health care entities and healthy homes providers. The states of Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island are looking to develop models that incorporate funding from housing, energy efficiency and the health sectors. By utilizing alternative payment model flexibility in managed care regulations, some states are developing partnerships where private capital is used for home improvements, with resources coming from health plans if and only if certain quality and cost-savings targets are met. New York Medicaid now requires its managed care organizations to enter into value-based agreements that include community-based organizations that provide non-medical services. New York Medicaid uses a model towards generating healthy homes for Medicaid members with asthma. GHHI was excited to be asked to participate in several value-based payment trainings held across the state in 2017-18.

National health plans, such as UnitedHealthcare, are exploring outcome or value-based contracts by which providers are paid based on quality metrics and their impact on the total cost of care for a member. Amerigroup in Maryland was so impressed by the reduction in cost of the members that they had referred to GHHI's direct service program, that they set up a two-year contract and are now funding home assessments, environmental education, supplies and integrated pest management for their members with asthma.

Hospitals are looking to partner with healthy homes providers as well. Following analysis with GHHI on their uncompensated care costs for asthmatics, Presence Health in Chicago is now piloting using community benefit funds (resources that every nonprofit hospital must use to be compliant with their IRS status) to fix up homes for a cohort of patients in partnership with Elevate Energy. In the past, those same dollars had been used to cover the uncompensated care costs as the patients went back again and again to the hospital because of the asthma triggers in their home.

All of this work is not only benefitting the people and families involved, but also providing more evidence and data around the important connection between housing and health. ■

Highlights of Our Recent Work

INAUGURAL LEAD POISONING PREVENTION CATALYTIC AWARDS

GHHI has invested \$225,000 in 10 local organizations using innovative strategies to eradicate lead poisoning. The Catalytic Award grantees received up to \$25,000 in prize money and a year of technical assistance and strategic guidance from GHHI and partners. The Inaugural Catalytic Award grantees are:

- Black Millennials 4 Flint (Washington, DC)
- #BmoreLEADFree (Baltimore, MD)
- Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo (Buffalo, NY)
- East Side Neighborhood Development Company (St. Paul, MN)
- Eck Institute for Global Health at Notre Dame (South Bend, IN)
- Environmental Health Coalition (National City, CA)
- Isles, Inc. (Trenton, NJ)
- Loyola University (Chicago, IL)
- Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers (Milwaukee, WI)
- WE ACT for Environmental Justice (New York, NY)

MARYLAND ASTHMA SUMMIT

On May 2, 2018, the Maryland Asthma Summit was hosted by the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative through partnership with the Greater Baltimore Asthma Alliance (GBAA),

a community partnership of individuals and organizations who are committed to reducing the burden of asthma in the Greater Baltimore area. Over 100 state and local stakeholders learned about best practices, specific aspects on the burden of asthma in Maryland, innovative research and interventions, and related policies. The forum also provided a space for open dialogue to form and sustain partnerships to address the burden of asthma and asthma-related disparities that disproportionately affect low income communities and communities of color.

MAKING BALTIMORE PUBLIC HOUSING HEALTHIER

In 2017, GHHI established an innovative partnership with the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) to implement an asthma prevention program that could become the best practice in healthy homes among public housing authorities nationwide. The one-year program took place in the O'Donnell Heights neighborhood of East Baltimore and included:

- Training of HABC inspection and maintenance workers, as well as HABC Resident Board Members, on enhanced Healthy Homes standards to ensure residents live in healthy, safe housing.
- Comprehensive assessment of the homes of all HABC residents with asthma.
- Hiring Community Health Workers to provide outreach, case management and in-home resident education.

GHHI Partner Spotlights

- GHHI Buffalo and GHHI Greater Syracuse sites both worked with their local Learning Network partners to develop and release comprehensive Lead Poisoning Prevention Action Plans in 2018 that are designed to accelerate prevention efforts in order to achieve the elimination of childhood lead poisoning in their jurisdictions. The Action Plans detail strategic recommendations for increasing: blood lead testing rates, housing standards, lead remediation funding, and enforcement mechanisms of local lead violations, housing codes and the EPA RRP Rule. As a result, these two action plans were created: *Renewing our Pledge: A Path to Ending Lead Poisoning of Buffalo's Most Vulnerable Citizens* and *Get The Lead Out: The Greater Syracuse Lead Poisoning Prevention Action Plan*.
- The GHHI Lewiston-Auburn site and the State of Maine are implementing the new blood lead action level of 5 µg/dl in order to remediate lead hazards in homes before children's lead poisoning levels elevate further. The State passed legislation mandating the lowering of the action level and provided funding for new lead inspectors to make the law successful.
- State of New Jersey Lead Poisoning Prevention Action Plan.

HABC and GHHI also delivered housing interventions, including installation of air filter machines, HEPA filter vacuums, integrated pest management, carpet removal, venting and mold remediation.

AGING IN PLACE

GHHI Baltimore's Aging in Place program, funded by the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, provides comprehensive modifications to make homes safer and healthier for low-income older adults. The program, a collaboration with local partners including Civic Works, Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore, Rebuilding Together Baltimore, and the City of Baltimore, provides services such as case management, installation of slip, trip and fall safety measures, replacement of faulty electrical wiring, roof repair, energy efficiency and weatherization, asthma trigger reduction and improving accessibility in the home. GHHI will also create an Aging in Place Toolbox to expand the use of such collaborative programming.

NEW FUNDING FOR HEALTHY HOUSING STRATEGIES

GHHI, the Center for Health Care Strategies and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation hosted a March 2018 convening in Washington, DC, bringing together health plans, hospital systems and health policy experts to address ways to fund healthy housing. The group first explored ways to align, braid and coordinate existing resources better, then discussed new alternate payment models that would allow sustainable funding for addressing the social determinants of health. Working closely with foundations and venture philanthropy, the group also worked to identify how private funding can expand programs to maximize their impact.

GHHI is finalizing an agreement with Amerigroup to provide home-based asthma education to high-risk asthma patients, a direct insurance plan reimbursement for GHHI's flagship Maryland direct-services program. The agreement was reached after an internal insurance-plan assessment of the health and health care cost impact of the GHHI services package, finding that it was worth the insurance plan's investment to directly fund the work.

With funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air and Radiation, GHHI is leading two cohorts of health care and service provider partners in six jurisdictions across the country to facilitate and support either new or existing partnerships to build or expand the scope of asthma programs reimbursed by Medicaid. The first cohort, consisting of organizations from Indiana, Massachusetts, Oregon,

and Pennsylvania, is focused on expanding programs to include asthma home visiting and environmental health services while also building the business case for these comprehensive services. The second cohort, consisting of organizations from Rhode Island and Iowa, is focused on engaging healthcare payers to receive reimbursement from Medicaid for comprehensive asthma services that lower costs.

SAVE THE DATE



September 16–18, 2018 / Salt Lake City, Utah



Green & Healthy Homes Initiative is excited to announce its 9th annual Executive Leadership Institute that will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, on September 16–18, 2018! The Institute is a forum for interactive learning and discussion around national best practices and tools to advance healthy, safe, and energy efficient housing. Engage directly with leaders from key sectors such as healthy housing, social impact financing and philanthropy to learn about innovative ideas and practical solutions for creating meaningful impact. We hope to see you there!



About the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) is a national nonprofit dedicated to breaking the link between unhealthy housing and unhealthy families. Formerly known as the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning, GHHI provides evidence-based direct services and technical assistance to create healthy, safe, and energy efficient homes. GHHI's end goal is to achieve improved health, economic and social outcomes for low-income families while reducing public and private health care costs.

Healthy Homes, Happy Families

Ruth Ann Norton, President & CEO

Editor: Kaletha Henry, Senior Communications Associate

Photo Credit: Andre Chung (2012); Kaletha Henry (2018)

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