

# Responding to Coronavirus/COVID-19 through Healthy Housing Interventions

## Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

Friday, March 27, 2020 | 12:00pm ET

**Ruth Ann Norton** | President and CEO,  
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

**David Dyjack, Dr.PH, CIH** | National  
Environmental Health Association

**Paul Haan** | Executive Director, Healthy  
Homes Coalition of West Michigan

**Session Panelists**

# Session Topics

**Keeping  
Healthy & Safe  
at Home**

**Emerging Best  
Practices for  
Interventions**

**Info &  
Resources for  
COVID-19  
Response**

**Discussion and  
Q&A**





# Impact of COVID-19 on Healthy Housing Services

**Ruth Ann Norton**

President & CEO, Green & Healthy Homes Initiative



## Common Sense Approach to Home Health During COVID-19 Pandemic

**David Dyjack, Dr.PH, CIH**

Executive Director, National Environmental Health Association

# Estimated 150 Million People at Home

- Urgent need to stop the spread of COVID-19 to reduce infections and deaths and related strain on health care services
- Families have more concentrated time in places that may have hazards, poor air quality, inadequate sanitation, or lack of thermal control

## Annual Estimates for Emergency Visits Related to Unhealthy Housing

Injuries  
40 million

Asthma  
1.7 million

COPD  
1.5 million

Influenza  
1.2 million

Heat Stroke  
4,100



# Environmental Health Hazards in Housing

## INDOOR AIR

- Combustion Gases
- Volatile Organic Compounds
- Radon
- Environmental Tobacco Smoke

## ASTHMA TRIGGERS AND ALLERGENS

- Mold and moisture
- Pests
- Pet dander

## HOME SAFETY

- Extreme Heat or Cold
- Injury and Fall Hazards
- Fire Hazards
- Biological contaminants
- Unsanitary conditions

## LEAD-BASED PAINT


- Chipping and peeling lead paint
- Lead dust

# The Burden of Unhealthy and Energy Inefficient Homes



30M families live in unhealthy homes

Homes with environmental hazards are making their residents sick




14.4M missed days of school each year

Asthma is the top reason students miss school




14.2M missed days of work each year


Collateral burden of sick children is missed days of work for parents and caretakers



\$81B+ spent on asthma




\$31B+ spent on slip & fall injuries



\$50.9B+ spent on lead poisoning

Over \$100B in taxpayer funding is spent each year to address the impact of these hazards



Low income families spend 20% of monthly income on energy costs

VS.

3.5% in other households



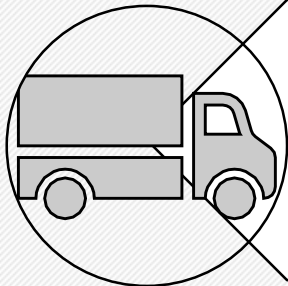
# GHHI Response: Virtual Visits & Assessments



Engaging telephonic and online platforms for education, housing assessments and referral sources to address emergency needs and provide prevention education sessions



Providing virtual environmental assessments to help identify hazards and provide advice to protect families from harm.



Delivering (when possible) Healthy Housing Supply Kits to families and older adults most at risk.

## Potential Healthy Homes Kit Supplies

- HEPA Vacuums
- Environmentally friendly cleaning supplies
- Furnace Filters
- Mattress and Pillow Covers
- Water Filtration Pitcher
- Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Supplies

# Keeping the Home Safe

## All households



- Clean hands at the door and at regular intervals
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching their face and cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, and handrails regularly
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

## Households with vulnerable seniors or those with significant underlying conditions



*Significant underlying conditions include heart, lung, kidney disease; diabetes; and conditions that suppress the immune system*

- Have the healthy people in the household conduct themselves as if they were a significant risk to the person with underlying conditions. For example, wash hands frequently before interacting with the person, such as by feeding or caring for the person
- If possible, provide a protected space for vulnerable household members
- Ensure all utensils and surfaces are cleaned regularly

## Households with sick family members



- Give sick members their own room if possible, and keep the door closed
- Have only one family member care for them
- Consider providing additional protections or more intensive care for household members over 65 years old or with underlying conditions



# Vulnerable Populations at Higher Risk

## General Risk Factors

- People 65 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People who are pregnant
- People with any underlying medical conditions, especially if not well controlled

## Other Comorbidities

- Chronic lung disease or asthma
- Congestive heart failure or coronary artery disease
- Diabetes
- Neurologic conditions that weaken ability to cough
- Weakened immune system
- Chemotherapy or radiation for cancer
- Sickle cell anemia
- Chronic kidney disease requiring dialysis
- Cirrhosis of the liver
- Lack of spleen or spleen that doesn't function correctly
- Extreme obesity



# Health & Safety for Vulnerable Populations

## Precautions & Services

- High risk individuals are being advised to stay home and avoid contact with others
- May need help getting medications, food, household items and other supplies
- Create a plan for what to do if they start experiencing symptoms

# Health & Safety for People with Asthma I

People with asthma may be at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19

- Stock up on supplies and take everyday social distancing precautions
- Wash your hands with soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizers, avoid sharing personal household items
- Stay home as much as possible and avoid crowds, sick people, cruise and air travel
- Separate any sick people in the home from the rest of the household

# Health & Safety for People with Asthma II

- Follow Asthma Action Plan and ensure 30 days of non-prescription medications and supplies
- Know how to use inhalers
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and hands
- Ensure good air flow in shared spaces
- Launder clothes and washable plush toys in the warmest appropriate water



# Resources for Older Adults I

## Learn How to Take Care of Yourself At Home

- Stay home except to receive medical care
- Stay in touch with medical service provider
- Avoid public transit
- Avoid contact with others (6 feet)
- Monitor symptoms
- Clean “high touch” surfaces, wash hands frequently, avoid sharing personal items, wear mask if sick
- Practice social distance but not social isolation



# Resources for Older Adults II

Know the Emergency Warning Signs (when to get medical attention immediately)

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

[AARP's Tele-Town Hall](#)

[Managing Mental Health in Isolation](#)





# Unintentional Injury Prevention: Older Adults

## Intrinsic Factors

- Advanced age
- Previous falls
- Muscle weakness
- Gait & balance problems
- Poor vision
- Postural hypotension
- Chronic conditions (Parkinson's, dementia, diabetes, etc.)
- Fear of falling

## Extrinsic Factors

- Lack of stair handrails
- Poor stair design
- Lack of bathroom grab bars
- Dim lighting or glare
- Obstacles & tripping hazards
- Slippery or uneven surfaces
- Psychoactive medications
- Improper use of assistive device



# Mental Health

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration Disaster  
Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or  
text the phrase TalkWithUs to 66746

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories and social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

# Health & Safety in the Home

## Housing Hazards Control

- Prevent Fires and Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (Smoke and CO Alarms)
- Manage Respiratory Conditions by Reducing Allergens (esp. Asthma/COPD)
- Keep the Air Inside your Home Free of Pollutants
- Reduce Excess Humidity
- Prevent Household Injuries (Trip & Fall Injuries)
- Interim Lead Paint Controls



# Responding to Coronavirus & COVID-19 in Healthy Housing Interventions

## **Paul Haan**

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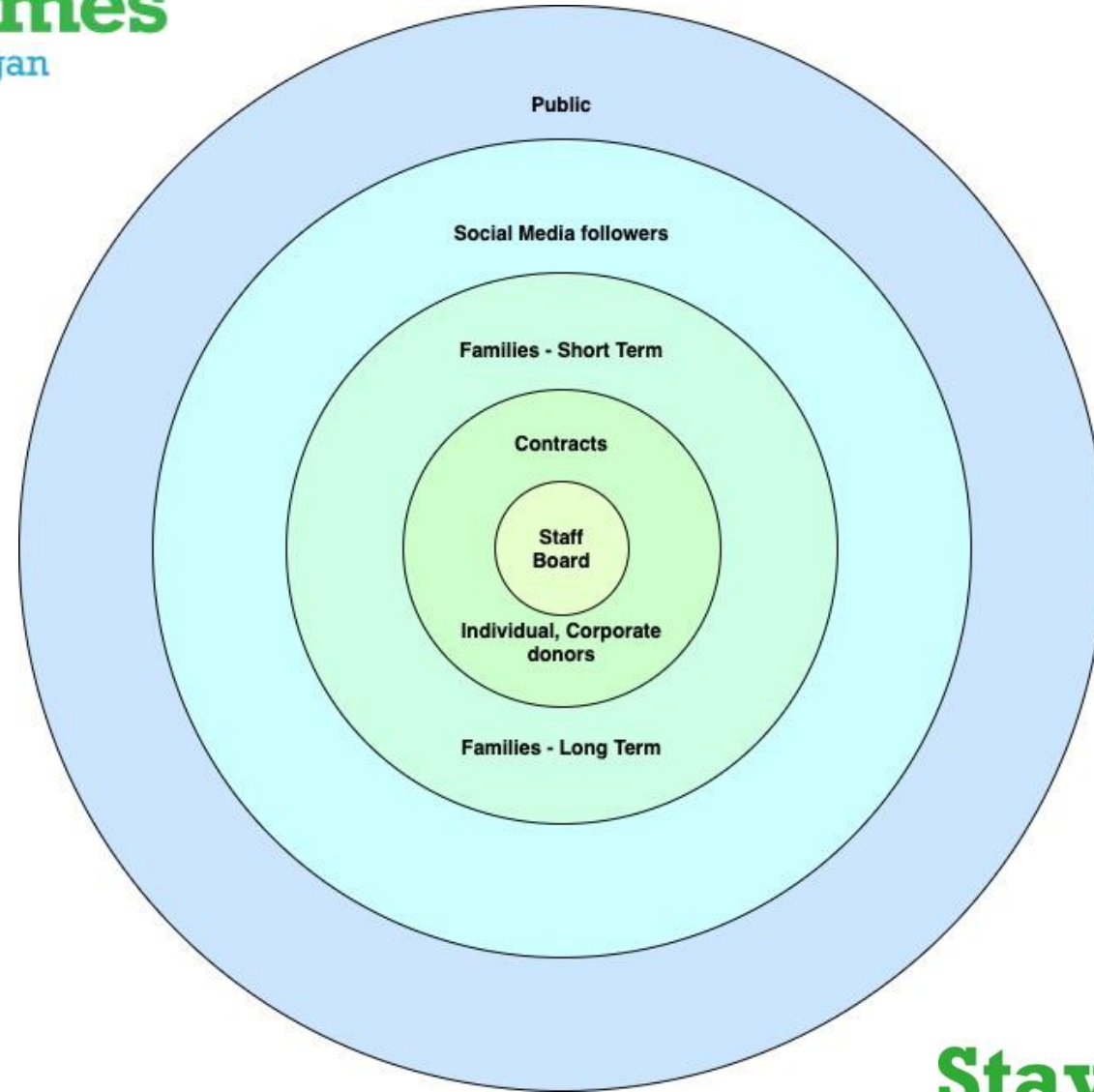
(616) 241-3300



# Hard pivot to remote messaging

- Lead with compassion.
- Make your message relevant to COVID-19.
- Link back to healthy housing, especially the Principles.
- Consider branding your messaging.

**Staying Safe at Home.**



**Staying Safe at Home.**

## Some things we are doing

- **Weekly contact with parents. Listening too.**
- **Social media, being careful not to overload.**
- **Blog posts for more in-depth information.**
- **Daily video.**

**Staying Safe at Home.**



## Some things we are doing (cont.)

- Weekly donor / parent e-blasts.
- Reaching out to local media.
- Think about all neighbors.
- Don't forget about your donors - be proactive!

**Staying Safe at Home.**

# Quédese Seguro en Casa

## ¿Cuáles preguntas tiene sobre Casas Saludables?

Estamos pasando más tiempo en casa. Durante las próximas tres semanas les traemos sugerencias de Hogares Saludables a través de varios medios sociales para ayudarle a hacer su hogar más saludable.

¿Que tipo de preguntas o preocupaciones tiene acerca de hacer su casa más segura y saludable?  
¡Dejanos Saber!



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(616) 241-3300

Typically replies within a day  
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They won't filter out airborne coronavirus, but they will make your home air healthier!

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**Staying Safe at Home.**

# Healthy Housing Policy & Advocacy

## COVID-19 Relief Legislation

- Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act

## Advocacy Priorities

- Eviction moratoriums and halt utility shutoffs during crisis
- Expand LIHEAP for bill assistance
- Increase investment in healthy housing and efficiency intervention programs
- Enable virtual support

## Funding & Regulatory Updates

- Foreclosure and eviction moratoriums (FHA & Section 184)
- HHS Grants for Older Adult care & testing at health centers
- Medicaid waivers to enable health services for response

# COVID-19 Federal Program Information

Federal Info Landing Page <https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>

## Key Resources for Health Housing Programs

Individuals &  
Healthcare  
Providers



Medicare  
Recipients



Housing  
Programs



Worker Safety



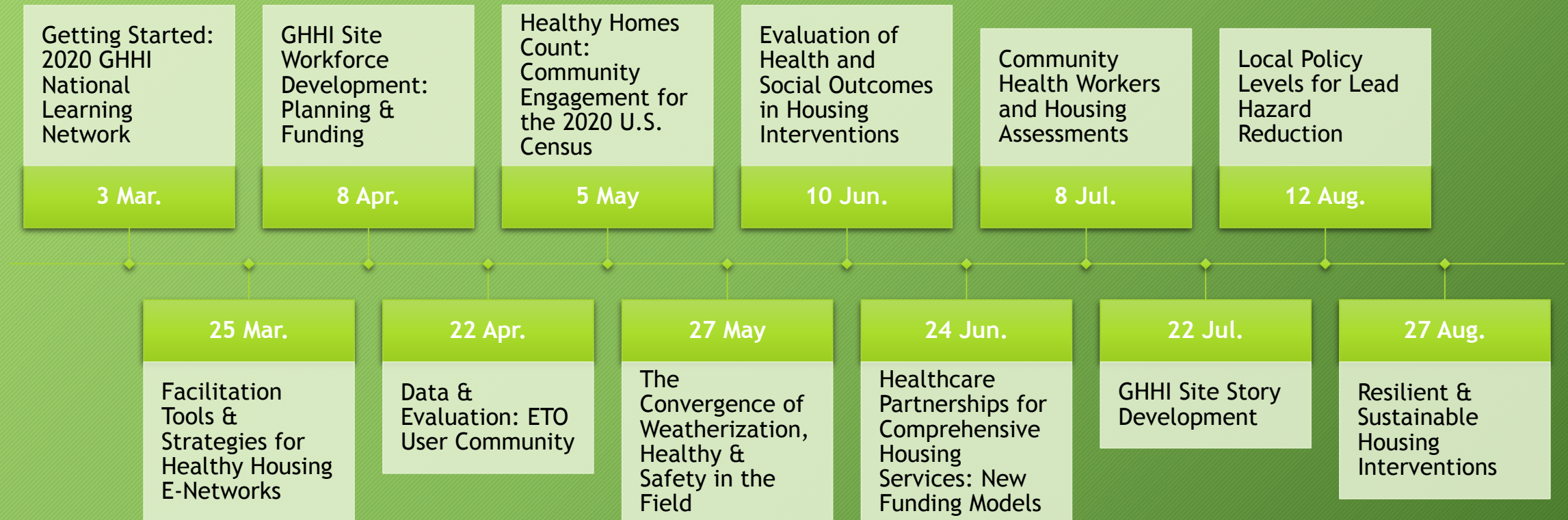
Disinfectants





# Questions & Discussion

# Upcoming Webinars: National Learning Network



# Upcoming Webinars: National Initiative for Asthma Reimbursement



April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2pm ET - Asthma Evidence Base



April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2pm ET - Reimbursement Pathways for Asthma Home Visiting Programs: Case Studies in Rhode Island and Iowa



June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1pm ET - Health and Social Benefits Related to Energy Efficiency Investments



June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2pm ET - Evaluation of Health and Social Outcomes in Housing Interventions



Summer 2020 - Alternative Payment Models and Contracting



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