

Housing can influence the health of residents in your communities. This is because housing is a *social determinant of health*. The social determinants of health are the interrelated social, political and economic factors that create the conditions in which people live, learn, work and play.



When housing is safe and affordable, its impact on health is generally positive and does not lead to health issues. This is not the case for many community members who pay large portions of their income towards rent or mortgage, or those who live in unsafe housing conditions.

- Housing is considered affordable if it costs **less than 30%** of a household's before-tax income.¹
 - A lack of affordable housing in the community can lead to poor health outcomes. These health outcomes can be related to both physical and mental well-being. Everyone deserves safe and affordable housing.
- Nearly **1 in 5** (18%) adults living in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties pay more than 30% of their income towards housing.² This number is much higher for renters, where over **1 in 3** (37%) renters are paying more than 30% of their income towards housing.³
- The right to adequate housing is a human right and protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code.³

When people are not housed, it is almost impossible to improve their circumstances. Recovering from a mental illness, finding a job or maintaining custody of children are extremely difficult without housing.

Role of local decision makers:

1. Prioritize affordable housing strategies in Community Safety and Well-Being Plans.^{4,5}
2. Encourage your municipality to facilitate free or low-cost provisions of suitable land to non-profit developers. Consider selling or donating municipal land to create long-term space for programs addressing homelessness.⁶
3. Lead and support the implementation of policies to retain affordable housing, including rent controls, the elimination of vacancy decontrol, and rental-only zoning.⁶
4. Ensure the right housing supply is built and contribute to the affordability of new developments through direct contribution, speeding up the approvals process, and creating greater certainty for approval.⁶
5. Support projects in the community that provide a range of housing options at price points that reflect all levels of income within the community.

Safe affordable housing protects the health of everyone in the community.

References

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