

Housing can influence your health. It is referred to as 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 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.²
- 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 mental illness, finding a job or maintaining custody of children are extremely difficult without housing.

What can your municipality do?

1. Prioritize affordable housing strategies in Community Safety and Well-Being Plans.^{4,5}
2. Support projects in the community that provide a range of housing options at price points that reflect all levels of income within the community.

What can you do?

1. Learn about the cost of housing in your area.
2. Ensure affordable housing is on the agenda for local decision makers.
3. Advocate for affordable housing across the housing continuum in your community and say no to NIMBYism.¹
4. If you are a homeowner, consider how you may be able to offer an additional unit.
5. Talk to your friends and neighbours about how affordable housing can benefit all members of the community.

When housing is not safe and affordable, it is harmful to the overall health of the community.

References

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