

It's about health care



The Colorado Housing Investment Fund will help families afford homes *and* health

Homes are places for living and healing; they are sacred spaces for rest, nourishment, relationships, and protection from natural elements. The health of Colorado's citizenry depends on the availability of decent and reasonably priced housing. Poor or difficult housing conditions jeopardize both psychological and physical health.

Coloradoans struggling economically can often only afford lower-end housing that is older, more dilapidated, and located in environmentally hazardous neighborhoods with pollutants that pose constant health threats.¹ High housing costs often force families to move in with friends or family who may already live in substandard housing. These overcrowded conditions diminish privacy, attract pests, exacerbate stress levels, and strain families' emotional and physical well-being.²

Moreover, with limited resources to meet basic needs, families are often forced to make agonizing decisions about their housing, food, health care and utilities. Often they choose less of each, to make ends meet. In a study surveying clients served by Colorado's Food Bank of the Rockies, 37.9% reported having to choose between paying for food or medical bills, 38.3% reported having to choose between paying for food or their rent or mortgage, and 42.8% reported having to choose between paying for food or utilities.³



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Furthermore, over 700,000 Coloradoans are medically uninsured⁴ and many thousands of others are underinsured. High housing costs are forcing many of these individuals to choose between housing payments or medical insurance premiums. These decisions shatter the delicate stasis of health as hunger, cold, and an inability to afford medicine and health care take their toll.

Footnote Sources

¹ *Health Costs of Poor Housing*, McAuley Insititute Literature Review, 2002.

² *Moving to Opportunity* Issue, Poverty Research News, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2001.

³ Report 'Hunger in the Rockies 2001' by Mathematica Policy Research Inc., <http://www.foodbankrockies.org/hunger.cfm#Colorado>.

⁴ *Facts & Myths*, Coalition for the Medically Underserved website: www.ccmu.org/facts.html.



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