

Integrating Energy Efficiency and Healthy Housing

National Safe & Healthy Housing Coalition Annual Meeting 2010 – Discussion Salon

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General Feedback

- Participants in the Energy & Health Salon thought it would be especially helpful to establish a universal standard for what is meant by "healthy homes" for HUD, EPA, DOE and their various programs (HomeStar, Weatherization Assistance, Recovery through Retrofit). Currently, it seems staff must "reinvent the wheel" each time they write regulations for their respective programs. The Coalition could even be helpful in writing these standards.
- In the same way, participants recommended a universal standard for energy retrofits to integrate standards into programs that have been conventionally described as "healthy homes."
- All programs from HUD, EPA, DOE should have an advisor from each agency to foster the goal of integrated housing programs. This may be especially helpful when new programs are developing because seeking review *after* a program has been substantially developed is too late. Participants agreed, more systematic communication among the agencies is needed.
- It is important that HomeStar regulations include healthy homes concerns using specific language, not vague phrases (even if well-meaning).
- Integrate healthy homes issues into RRP training going forward. Members of the group thought this was possible and desirable to do within the one-day training. No one suggested a longer training.
- Rigorous standards for implementation of HH or DOE actions, instead of requiring contractors to prove the impact of their work per job. Research tells us that if a certain improvement is made according to accepted standards, the impact of improved indoor environment or energy efficiency will be achieved.

Barriers

- A barrier to implementing HomeStar effectively is informing the public about the opportunity. One solution is to "bombard" people with a HomeStar campaign. Suggestions include: going door-to-door, using one outreach worker to convey information about multiple programs; use realtors and apartment associations to help with communications, educating community nurses, physicians and clergy who reach people at the most grassroots level.
- Concern was expressed about ventilation standards for older urban buildings and that more research was needed on this.

FY2010 Agenda (Priorities)

- Facilitate interagency coordination and fund integrated health and energy efficiency activities through enactment of the Reed-Brady Safe and Healthy Housing Act (H.R. 3891), Healthy Housing Council Bill (S. 1658, H.R. 3793), and other measures.