Affordable Housing:
Good Health is Homeward Bound

Lack of affordable housing and housing instability are major challenges across many of the communities PeaceHealth serves especially in Washington's Clark, Cowlitz, San Juan and Whatcom counties. Housing challenges often occur alongside poverty and food insecurity, together imperiling the well-being of affected households and the community as a whole. Alongside our partners, PeaceHealth is taking action to help those in need.

The Need

- **43%** of **Lane County households earn less** than the basic cost of living which, alongside a lack of affordable housing, contributes to the increasing number of homeless people in this community.

- Nearly **1** in **5 Lane County. residents live with 'severe housing problems,'** including a high housing cost burden, overcrowding, or lack of kitchen or plumbing.

- In Cowlitz County, **over a 1/3 of residents cannot afford a basic household stability budget**, largely caused by a lack of affordable housing.

- In 2017 there was an **18% increase in the number of people living outside** in Clark County.

Research has consistently demonstrated a strong link between housing and health, with factors generally falling into four categories:

- HOUSING QUALITY
- LOCATION
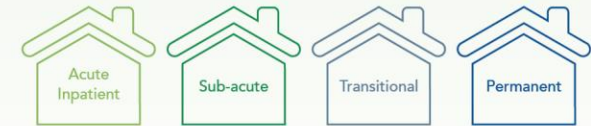- AFFORDABILITY
- SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTES

Deeper Dive

Unaffordable housing impacts other areas of health, with research showing:

- As a state's average rent increases, the food insecurity rate also increases.

- Low-income households that spend more than 50% of their incomes on housing costs spend 41% less on food each month than similar households.

- Adults living in unaffordable housing are more likely than other adults to describe their health as fair or poor.

- Living in unaffordable housing is associated with higher levels of stress, depression and anxiety.

- Stable housing is a key intervention for people who experience serious mental illness.

What are the different types of housing in play?

- Acute Inpatient
- Sub-acute
- Transitional
- Permanent

TAKING ACTION – What PeaceHealth Is Doing

Service-enriched housing in partnership with community social services and nonprofit housing development organizations is part of our overall community wellness strategy. Examples include:

- Partnership with **Kaiser Permanente** in support of **ShelterCare**, a local private nonprofit in Lane County, to provide emergency and transitional housing along with prescriptions, medical equipment and transportation assistance.

- Through a partnership with **Rotary International**, PeaceHealth Ketchikan provides nearly free or reduced-cost stay for families and patients in a local condominium owned by PeaceHealth.

- PeaceHealth also contributes to supporting the cost of resident services at **Eleanor Apartments** in Bellingham.

Eleanor Apartments

Named in honor of Eleanor Gilmore, a Sister of St. Joseph Peace and a Mercy Housing member, this Mercy Housing project provides 80 units of affordable housing for low-income seniors.

Future

PeaceHealth is actively engaged in discussions about donating property for Drug Court housing in Bellingham, and developing collaborative short-term housing in Eugene.

PeaceHealth