



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# Housing, Health and the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada

Insights into on-reserve housing

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## Insights into on reserve housing





# Indian reserve system has changed how First Nations people live

- Homes are not built to the culture and needs of the population
- Formerly a nomadic lifestyle
- Homes are built according to western norms
- Free housing and lack of home ownership
- Low individual income and economic base of communities



## Complex and inadequate funding programs

- Community housing is subsidized by AANDC and CMHC
- Communities expected to generate additional revenue
- Subsidy programs have requirements and limitations
- Band is responsible to manage housing program; this requires:
  - Understanding importance
  - Human resource capacity
  - Capacity in housing administration
  - Rental policies, standards or by-laws
- High building costs in remote and isolated communities

## Funding is limited

Housing investments must compete with other infrastructure improvements (water/sewer, roads, education facilities, etc.)

Housing is approx. 8% of infrastructure investments (AANDC)

Total Infrastructure Investment 2014-2015	\$165,191,734
BC First Nation Population (Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey)	62,235
Infrastructure Investment per Capita	\$2,654

# Housing on reserve deteriorates more rapidly





## Substandard housing and overcrowding

- Large families
- Geographic conditions
- Site planning
- Housing design
- Building materials
- Construction practices
- Building standards
- Lack of preventative maintenance programs
- Lifestyle factors









**Lack of preventative maintenance**

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of themselves and their family, including... housing...”

Universal declaration of human rights, article 25





Not only physical health impacts, but also mental health, social functioning of families and communities, and connectedness to culture and spirit

Physiological	Psychological	Communicable Disease	Injuries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thermal</li><li>• Chemical purity</li><li>• Sunlight</li><li>• Space</li><li>• Noise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Privacy</li><li>• Family life</li><li>• Community life</li><li>• Cleaning facilities</li><li>• Aesthetics</li><li>• Social standards</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water quality</li><li>• Water quantity</li><li>• Toilet facilities</li><li>• Sewage disposal</li><li>• Pests</li><li>• Perishable food storage</li><li>• Sleeping rooms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fire prevention</li><li>• Fire escape</li><li>• Burns and electrical hazards</li><li>• Radon/CO</li><li>• Falls</li><li>• Traffic</li><li>• Dogs</li></ul>



## Healthy Housing

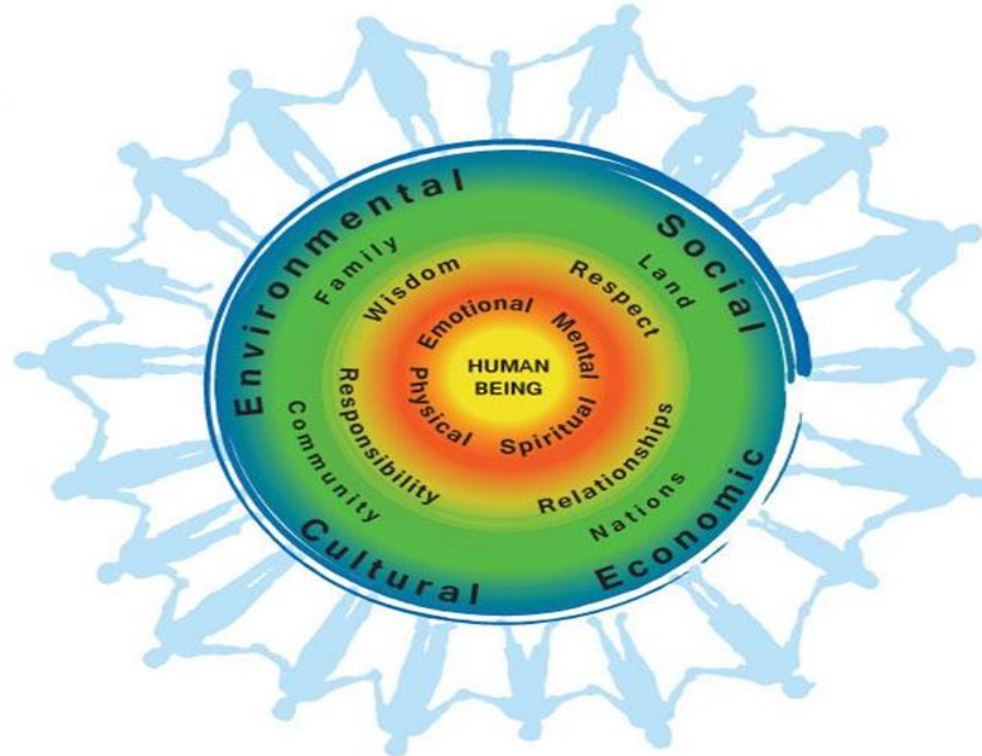
WHO has adopted a broad definition of housing - encompasses four inter-related aspects.

1. House (or dwelling) is the physical structure used, or intended to be used, for human habitation.
2. Home is the economic, social and cultural structure established by the household.
3. Neighbourhood (or immediate housing environment) includes the streets, the estate, the shops, places of worship, recreational and green space, and transport.
4. community comprises those living, working and providing services in the neighbourhood.

*First Nations lens: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual*



## Environmental Public Health Services works with communities to identify unhealthy homes





# Adequate systems and resources are needed

Community and occupant driven

Housing policy

Building standards and inspection

Accountability and responsibility

Sustainable funding

Housing models incorporating control and ownership

Incentives for maintenance

Public health interventions

Healthy housing research





## More information:

- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada  
<http://www.aadnc-andc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010715/1100100010719>
- Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation  
[http://www.cmhc.ca/en/ab/abfinaho/upload/68282\\_EN\\_w\\_ACC.pdf](http://www.cmhc.ca/en/ab/abfinaho/upload/68282_EN_w_ACC.pdf)
- FNHA Perspective on Wellness  
<http://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-and-the-first-nations-health-authority/first-nations-perspective-on-wellness>
- Health Canada FNIHB Resources  
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnihb-spnia/promotion/public-publique/home-maison/mould-moisissure-eng.php>



Thank you!

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