

Unstable housing to cost health care system estimated \$111 billion over 10 years, study finds

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Unstable housing among families with children will cost the United States an estimated \$111 billion in health and education expenditures over the next ten years, according to new research published by Children's HealthWatch based at Boston Medical Center.

Study authors calculated the health-related [costs](#) of mothers and children who have either experienced homelessness, moved two or more times, or been behind on rent in the previous year. Costs linked to unstable housing include increased hospitalizations, ambulatory visits, dental procedures, [mental health care](#) for mothers and special education services for children.

Utilizing economic modeling, the nationwide study found that the US health system will spend an estimated \$76.8 billion caring for mothers experiencing worse physical and mental health and \$34.3 billion treating [children's](#) health due to the lack of a stable home over the next ten years if the high number of families currently living in unstable homes persists. Study authors suggest that those estimates could be even higher because do not account for all health conditions linked to unstable homes and do not include costs for all [family](#) members.

"Ensuring stable homes for all will not only make families healthier, but save our nation money in both the near and long term," says the report's author, Ana Poblacion, post-doctoral research fellow at Children's

HealthWatch. The report also highlights policy solutions that would improve housing affordability across the nation. Recommendations include federal measures to increase the supply of affordable homes, national investments in resources that help families meet rent demands, and ways for the [health](#) care industry to engage in efforts to provide patients stable homes as a mechanism for reducing [health care](#) and education costs.

Dr. Megan Sandel, pediatrician and Children's HealthWatch Principal Investigator adds, "A stable home is like a vaccine for my patients and their families. It keeps them healthy now and in the future. But, the pharmacy is not fully stocked. We need investments to ensure everyone has access to the stable home vaccine."

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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