HEALTH POLICY IN EVERY POLICY

Linking Housing and Health Disparities in New Orleans

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A Broken Healthcare System

• Population estimates pre-Katrina: 455,000
  ▫ At this time, New Orleans had 2580 hospital beds. The national average of hospital beds per 1000 people is 2.7. New Orleans, pre-Katrina, was at 2.5 with a ratio of roughly 176:1
• Population estimate released in March 2009 is 300,000.
  ▫ We now have 758 hospital beds available. Our number of beds per 1000 is 0.758. The ratio of residents to beds is 396:1
• Mental health treatment options have become severely limited.
  ▫ Pre-Katrina: 240 psychiatric beds
    • Post-Katrina: 105, with a proposal from the governor to close 30 more. 60 of those beds are at Orleans Parish Prison
Open Hospitals in the Metro Area
Vacant and Blighted Housing

- March 2008: 71,657
- September 2008: 69,727
- April 2009: 66,845
Poverty and Unemployment

- **41%** of New Orleans adults report family income below 200% of poverty
- Of this population
  - **78%** are African-American
  - **67%** are Women
  - **62%** have attained a high school degree or less
- While we have a high poverty rate, we have a comparatively low unemployment rate. In February 2009 the unemployment rate for the metro area was **5.3%**, well below the national rate of **8.9%**
## Fair Market Rental Rates—Greater New Orleans Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>1-Bedroom</th>
<th>2-Bedroom</th>
<th>3-Bedroom</th>
<th>4-Bedroom</th>
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<td>FY 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>$365</td>
<td>$418</td>
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<td>FY 2009</td>
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<td>$794</td>
<td>$881</td>
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</table>

Source: [Greater New Orleans Community Data Center](#)
• **Two in five** damaged affordable rental units statewide are expected to be repaired or replaced with recovery assistance

• In 2007, in the midst of a spike in rental prices, the city moved forward with a plan to demolish more than **4500** public housing units
  ▫ Since then, the Lafitte, St. Bernard, B.W. Cooper, and C.J. Peete housing developments have nearly been completely razed.

• According to estimates from the end of 2008, **31,000** displaced families across the nation were utilizing Disaster Housing Assistance Program vouchers whose deadline is approaching on August 31, 2009
  ▫ **14,422** of those families are living in the metro area

• A report by PolicyLink, of Oakland, CA estimates that New Orleans has roughly **12,000** homeless residents, including at least **1,600** children that have already been identified by Orleans Parish Schools.

• The Gulf Opportunity Zone Affordable Housing Tax Credit exists to give tax breaks to developers who plan for affordable housing developments. There are **85** open projects in the metro area. So far, **12** have been completed. **33** do not have complete financing.
  ▫ Of the nearly **10,000** proposed units, only **1033** are open so far
How Can We Reverse These Trends?

- Increase the number of affordable housing units
  - The lack of housing is a vital concern for all New Orleanians
  - The housing rates are keeping some residents from returning, and forcing others to spend well above their means.
  - Immediate plan to assist families who will be transitioning out of DHAP assistance

- Living wage for service employees
  - With an increase in income, our most at-risk population can afford to spend money on maintaining their health

- Extend Healthcare services
  - Preventative options
    - Increase health literacy
    - Healthy lifestyle promotion
  - Re-open Charity Hospital
    - The vital facility not only served the uninsured by providing primary and emergency care, it also relieved the financial burden posed by uninsured patients upon private emergency rooms. We are currently operating without a safety net.
    - Preventative and primary care provided by the hospital not only improves the quality of life for patients, but also relieve financial burdens created by emergency care