

In This Issue

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The issue of homelessness, poverty, and substandard housing is a significant public health concern that affects millions of individuals worldwide. **Homelessness** is the state of lacking a permanent, safe, and adequate dwelling, while **substandard housing** refers to conditions that do not meet basic health and safety standards. These issues have far-reaching implications for public health, as they contribute to the spread of communicable diseases, exposure to environmental hazards, and the exacerbation of physical and mental health problems.

Individuals facing homelessness and those living in substandard housing are at an increased risk of exposure to environmental and infectious diseases due to poor living conditions and limited access to healthcare. They may also lack access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and basic hygiene necessities, further increasing their vulnerability to illness. Moreover, these individuals often face barriers to healthcare, including limited access to medical care, lack of health insurance, and difficulties accessing medication.

In addition to physical health concerns, homelessness and substandard housing have a significant impact on mental health. The stress of living in unstable and unsafe environments, coupled with the lack of support networks, can lead to anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns. Individuals facing homelessness also face a greater risk to their personal safety, and of substance abuse and addiction.

Addressing the connection between homelessness, substandard housing, and public health requires a multi-sectoral approach that involves collaboration between healthcare, housing, and social services. Efforts to improve access to affordable housing, healthcare, and social support networks can help address the root causes of these issues and improve public health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

We were privileged to be interviewed on this topic by the University of Delaware's First State Insights online radio show. Our comments amplify this brief summary and we encourage you to take a listen for free: [Housing, Place, and Health Outcomes by First State Insights \(soundcloud.com\)](https://www.soundcloud.com/first-state-insights)

Homelessness and substandard housing are significant public health concerns that require urgent attention, and we hope this issue helps explicate these areas for the reader. This issue, we welcome guest editors from the University of Delaware: Dr. Stephen Metraux, Roger Hesketh, and Mimi Rayl from the Center for Community Research and Service, and Sean O'Neill from the Institute for Public Relations; they have gathered a number of excellent articles. As always, we look forward to hearing from you with your feedback on this issue, and suggestions for future issues of the Delaware Journal of Public Health.

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