



# The National AIDS Housing Coalition

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**For immediate release**

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## **NOVEMBER ISSUE OF *AIDS AND BEHAVIOR* FINDS “POWERFUL LINK” BETWEEN HOUSING AND HIV TRANSMISSION**

**New York, NY November 15, 2007** -- A November special issue of the international scientific journal *AIDS and Behavior* (Volume 11, Supplement 2, November 2007) includes groundbreaking research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and others showing a demonstrable correlation between a person's housing status and his likelihood of transmitting or getting HIV. The issue is available at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/1909-7165>.

According to researchers from the CDC, who published early findings from a forthcoming large-scale study in the special issue, homelessness and unstable housing “increase the risk of HIV acquisition and transmission and adversely affect the health of people living with HIV.” The findings prompted the researchers to issue a call to action that “homelessness be treated as a major public health issue confronting the United States.” The full CDC study will be presented in March at the National Housing and HIV/AIDS Research summit in Baltimore.

The first publication of its kind, this special issue of *AIDS and Behavior* includes 18 peer-reviewed articles on the relationship of housing status and HIV risk and health outcomes, including a policy perspective from former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros. Research studies reported in the issue show that:

- Homeless or unstably housed persons were two to six times more likely to “have recently used hard drugs, shared needles or exchanged sex” than similar low-income persons who were stably housed.
- Receipt of housing assistance enabled homeless persons with substance use and mental health problems to achieve stability over time and to cease or reduce both drug related and sexual risk behaviors.
- Over a 12-year period, housing status and receipt of housing assistance consistently predicted entry and retention in HIV medical care, regardless of demographics, drug use, health and mental health status, or receipt of other services.

These and other findings reported in the special issue add to the growing evidence that housing itself independently reduces risk of HIV infection and improves the health of persons living with HIV. This evidence challenges the prevailing “risky person” focus on individual characteristics such as drug use and homelessness.

“The findings reported here suggest that the condition of homelessness, and not simply traits of homeless individuals, influences risk behaviors and health care utilization,” says *Housing and HIV* Special Editor Dr. Angela Aidala of the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. “This points to housing as a strategic target for intervention – a potentially exciting new tool to end the AIDS epidemic in America.”

Malcolm Coley, a consumer member of the National AIDS Housing Coalition who is profiled in one of the *AIDS and Behavior* articles, was saved from near-certain death from AIDS after he received a federal Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) housing voucher in 1996. Coley has remained stably housed since, and recently earned his real estate license. “I am living proof of what the scientists are now showing about housing,” Coley says.

**The National AIDS Housing Coalition** is a national non-profit housing organization that works to advance the creation, development, management and growth of housing for persons living with HIV/AIDS in our communities.