

# **Ann Arbor Housing Commission: Holistic Health Services**

**Community Partner: Ann Arbor Housing Commission**

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## **Project description and scope**

In order to identify community health needs and potential opportunities for intervention, first-and third-year pharmacy students will interview stakeholders of AAHC, such as residents at AAHC properties, AAHC staff, and community organizations that provide services to residents of AAHC.

## **Project context and need**

Individuals living in poverty are more likely to have poor health due to a complex set of social determinants of health such as socioeconomic status, education, housing, and access to care [1]. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines social determinants of health as “the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life” [2]. In Washtenaw County, we have generally positive overall health statistics and we rank fourth in the state of Michigan for health outcomes [countyhealthrankings.org]. For example, only 13% of adults smoke, 15% are physically inactive, and only 5% lack health insurance. The county population has demographic statistics supporting an affluent community, as 85% of individuals have some college and 11% of children live in poverty. What these general statistics hide are the number of individuals living in our community who experience housing or food insecurity or who lack access to health or social services due to a complex set of circumstances. These circumstances may include lack of affordable housing, unemployment, family/domestic violence, mental illness, chronic medical problems, substance use disorders and aging out of foster care.

Individuals in need in our community may reside in properties managed by the Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC). AAHC “seeks to provide desirable housing and related supportive services for low-income individuals and families on a transitional and/or permanent basis.” The AAHC owns and manages 16 properties in Ann Arbor, with 412 units. AAHC tenants must meet income eligibility requirements to receive a voucher rent subsidy. Residents pay no more than 30% of their household gross income on rent and utilities. In addition, the AAHC provides housing choice voucher (HCV) to over 1400 families in Washtenaw County who reside in privately owned housing. At the AAHC, 75% of their housing vouchers go to individuals making 30% of the area median income or less (\$24,300 for 2-person household). The need far exceeds the availability of subsidized housing in the Ann Arbor community. Over 4,300 applications were received by AAHC in November 2018 when they opened the housing choice voucher (HCV) waiting list and only about 100 vouchers turn over and become available each year. Housing insecurity with its downstream consequences for individuals and families exist in Ann Arbor.

## **Expected outcomes**

This partnership will allow for the teams of inter-professional faculty and students to respond to community needs to improve health, mitigate health disparities, and advance social change.