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BrainGain@PEC provides brief summaries of research or publications on family homelessness and related issues. Previous issues of BrainGain@PEC can be found at <http://bit.ly/2iaczvQ>.

Select data on families experiencing homelessness surveyed by Children’s HealthWatch

Researchers associated with Children’s HealthWatch published **Unstable Housing and Caregiver and Child Health in Renter Families**, offering information on families who experience homelessness that is not normally available to providers and systems who work with these families. Some families from Philadelphia are included.

Children’s HealthWatch published their report in January, 2018, in *Pediatrics*, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Its objective was to evaluate how three forms of **housing instability** (*behind on rent, multiple moves, homelessness*) relate to caregiver and child health among low-income households. Researchers surveyed 22,324 families, of which **1,967 (12%) were homeless**.

Who should read this
Staff of emergency housing systems in Philadelphia, the Children’s Workgroup Early Childhood Committee, and others who work with families who experience homelessness.

Of the 22,234 households, 3,315 households (15% of total) resided in **Philadelphia. Of this number, 212 families (6%) were homeless**. Philadelphia’s 212 homeless families represented 11 percent of the homeless households in the report.

This summary shows a **sample of characteristics and outcome data** specific to **all** families experiencing homelessness. Unfortunately, the dataset on the Philadelphia families is not available to PEC at this time. The Children’s HealthWatch report can be read at <http://bit.ly/2KeCpbo>.

Philadelphia Sample of Households (N)	Stable Housing (N)	Behind on Rent (N)	Multiple Moves (N)	Homelessness (N)
5,103	3,315	1,356	220	212

Key observations of all families in the survey who experienced homelessness:

- **35% reported not breastfeeding their infant**
- **97% reported having health insurance**
- **80% reported not being married**
- **Education:**
 - 30% reported ‘some high school’
 - **37% reported having a high school diploma**

- 33% were a college graduate
- Caregiver's mean age was 27
- **27% caregivers reported being employed**
- 84% reported received SNAP
- **78% reported receiving WIC**
- 25% reported residing in subsidized housing
- **17% reported receiving LIHEAP**
- 47% reported not receiving TANF
- **15% experienced eviction in the previous 5 years**
- 54% received a formal eviction
- **15% reported having a baby of low birth weight**
- 31% reported child hospitalizations
- **13% reported that the child was in 'fair and/or poor health'**
- 14% reported the child at risk for underweight
- **27% reported a developmental risk**
- 8% reported admission from the emergency room departments
- **33% reported maternal health was 'fair and/or poor'**
- 44% reported maternal depressive symptoms
- 50% reported household food insecurity

Comparing Survey Respondents in Stable Housing vs. Homeless					
		Stable Housing		Homeless	
		N	%	N	%
Child's insurance	Public	14,047	96	1,903	97
	No insurance	627	4	59	3
Caregiver's race and/or ethnicity	Hispanic	4,662	32	552	28
	African American	7,727	53	1,070	55
	White	1,728	12	216	11
	Other	457	3	105	5
Caregiver's marital status	Married	4,842	33	397	20
	Not married	9,845	67	1,567	80
Caregiver's education	Some high school graduate	4,034	28	597	30
	High school graduate	6,055	41	725	37
	College graduate	4,590	31	640	33
Caregiver's age (mean, years)		26	6	27	6
Caregiver's employed	Yes	5,929	40	538	27
	No	8,762	60	1,426	73
SNAP	Yes	9,333	64	1,625	84
	No	5,254	36	322	17
WIC	Yes	11,363	78	11,363	78

	No	3,248	22	3,248	22
Current subsidized housing	Yes	3,193	22	487	25
	No	11,203	78	1,462	75
LIHEAP	Yes	2,608	21	280	17
	No	9,783	79	1,381	83
TANF	Yes	3,381	23	1,043	53
	No	11,213	77	910	47
Eviction in the past 5 years (starting in 2011)	Yes	274	3	227	14
	No	10,784	98	1,347	86
Formal eviction	Yes	113	54	113	54
	No	98	46	69	37
Low birth weight, < 2500 g	Yes	2,076	14	279	15
	No	12,346	86	1,633	85
Child hospitalization	Yes	3,383	27	608	31
	No	10,711	73	1,336	69
Child fair and/or poor health	Yes	1,415	10	265	13
	No	13,282	90	1,699	87
At risk for underweight	Yes	1,990	14	263	14
	No	12,176	86	1,657	86
Developmental risk	Yes	2,108	18	473	27
	No	9,958	83	1,293	73
Well child	Yes	4,769	41	566	33
	No	6,770	59	1,128	67
Admission from Emergency Dept.	Yes	1,412	14	123	8
	No	8,927	86	1,461	92
Maternal health fair and/or poor	Yes	2,957	21	625	33
	No	11,373	79	1,301	68
Maternal depressive symptoms	Yes	2,344	17	839	44
	No	11,561	83	1,060	56
Household food insecurity	Yes	2,721	19	976	50
	No	11,979	81	990	50
Child food insecurity	Yes	1,208	8	527	27
	No	13,499	92	1,439	73
Energy insecurity	No	12,224	84	1,491	76
	Moderate	1,413	10	174	9
	Severe	9,977	7	291	15
Household forgone	Yes	2,041	14	515	26

care	No	12,633	86	1,446	74
Child forgone care	Yes	456	3	193	10
	No	14,211	97	1,769	90
Health cost sacrifices	Yes	852	6	241	13
	No	13,510	94	1,692	87

Households with homelessness experienced increased adjusted odds of hardships, including:

- **Health outcomes:**
 - Child lifetime hospitalization
 - Child health fair and/or poor
 - Developmental delays in children
 - Caregiver health fair and/or poor
 - Maternal depression

- **Hardship outcomes:**
 - Forgoing household and child health care
 - Household and child food insecurity
 - Energy insecurity

Study sample and procedure

- Children’s HealthWatch conducted household-level surveys and medical record audits from May 1, 2009 to December 31, 2015 in primary (Baltimore, MD and Minneapolis, MN) and pediatric emergency departments (Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Little Rock, AR; and Philadelphia, PA). Institutional review board approval was obtained at each site and renewed yearly. Caregivers were approached to be screened for participation; 31,250 (93%) agreed to be screened, and 26,845 (80%) were eligible and completed the interview. Eligibility criteria for the study included public or no health insurance (as a proxy for low-income); child’s age 48 months; research site state residency; caregiver’s ability to speak English, Spanish or Somali (in Minneapolis only); respondent living in the child’s household, and consent to be interviewed. Only renter households were included in the study to better represent families most vulnerable to housing instability. This resulted in a final sample size of 22,324 caregivers and child dyads.

About PEC:

People’s Emergency Center’s mission is to nurture families, strengthen neighborhoods and drive change. PEC offers more than 250 affordable housing units, job training, parenting and early childhood education, financial education and planning, life skills and technology coursework for families, children and youth who experience homelessness. This BrainGain@PEC was developed by Ornella Pitah and Joe Willard. For more information, email at policy@pec-cares.org.