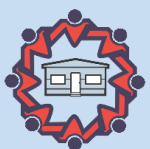


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# HOME SICK:

Uncovering the health harms in  
Homes of America's manufactured  
housing communities



**MHAction**  
Manufactured Housing Action

**HIP**  
HUMAN IMPACT PARTNERS

# Executive Summary

***They [Homes of America] have made it so miserable for us. We used to love to come home. This was our home. We thought we could live here until we died and our life is so miserable, so miserable. This place has ruined our life, our health, and our future.***

**Barry Yost,**  
Shadow Wood  
Mobile Home Park,  
West Virginia

Shadow Wood Mobile Home Park, where Barry Yost lives, is one of five manufactured home communities in Mercer County, West Virginia, that Homes of America, LLC purchased as part of its major buy up of manufactured home communities across the Midwest and southern US in recent years. The company, which began its buying spree in 2021, now owns at least 144 manufactured home communities, most of which are in Florida, Michigan, and Illinois.

About 15% of the US population lives in manufactured homes, with nearly 30% of those residents reporting that they are disabled, retired, or unable to work. Traditionally, manufactured home communities — also known as mobile home parks — have provided a vital affordable housing option for people on low or fixed incomes, including the elderly, working class people, immigrant families, and people living with disabilities. Now, large corporate landowners like Homes of America are changing that.

Homes of America follows a playbook that is characteristic of corporate landowners focused on maximizing profit: they impose steep rent increases and fees while neglecting basic maintenance and upkeep. These practices maximize short-term profits while leaving residents to deal with hazardous living conditions, financial strain, and associated health impacts. In general, private equity models of housing can be especially harmful for communities because investors may not have any incentive to keep parks in decent condition, or even directly profitable. Private equity companies earn large amounts of money through complicated financial maneuvers, such as purchasing manufactured home communities only to take out loans for other investments.

In 2024, Private Equity Stakeholder Project and Manufactured Housing Action published research describing Homes of America's rent increases and resident displacement through evictions. Building on this research, we investigated the public health implications of Homes of America's manufactured home ownership practices, as indicative of broader national trends in corporate ownership of manufactured housing parks and other types of housing.

# “ Our research found that the unhealthy conditions in the Homes of America communities we examined are linked to serious health impacts.

We draw on in-depth interviews with 20 residents of Homes of America communities in Michigan, Virginia, West Virginia, Illinois, and Florida, as well as an extensive examination of public records obtained through request, including housing code inspections in 10 communities.

Our research found that the unhealthy conditions in the Homes of America communities we examined are linked to serious health impacts. We also found that the combination of rent hikes, eviction threats, and habitability issues leave residents feeling stressed and trapped, with nowhere to go. Residents described serious physical and mental health effects of the stress, including vomiting, migraines, fluctuations in weight, high blood pressure, depression, and anxiety. With the stark imbalance of power between residents and Homes of America, residents also described a lack of control and feelings of powerlessness over their living conditions, which have been shown to contribute to adverse health outcomes.

## Key Findings

### Poor drinking water quality

Several Homes of America communities were found in violation of water quality standards by regulatory agencies. Potential contaminants, like lead and bacteria, may have contributed to residents' gastrointestinal health and skin issues. All residents we spoke with resorted to buying bottled water to protect their health and described the financial burdens associated with purchasing water and repairing appliances and fixtures damaged by the water supply.

*I had the worst stomach ache, and I went to my doctor with the water report, and I asked him... 'Could this be making me sick?' And he [the doctor] said, 'Looking at this, it could be.'*

**Sandra Smith,**  
North Morris Estates, Michigan

## Water shutoffs

Some communities experienced sporadic water shutoffs lasting hours to days or weeks. The shutoffs left most residents we spoke with without consistent access to water. These residents reported experiencing stress and serious disruptions in their ability to perform daily tasks like personal hygiene, cooking and childcare. Some residents experienced challenges using medical devices that required clean and predictable water access.

*We would often have the water get shut off with no notice, not a 24 hour notice, not a one hour notice... We would just get up in the morning and it would be off. So we would wind up going to the bathroom at the gas station up the street.*

**Lainey,**  
Lake Suzanne Mobile Home Park, Illinois

## Vacant homes and debris

Unoccupied homes and piles of trash around communities created safety hazards and attracted pests, rodents and stray animals. Residents feared trips and falls, and some experienced injuries from falls. They also worried about the risks of infectious disease from pests and rodents, and attacks from stray animals. Additionally, the emptiness of their neighborhoods heightened residents' feelings of isolation and loneliness.

*I'll be honest, the worst thing is, it's depressing... We used to have neighbors walking around, kids outside playing. Now, there's hardly anybody left... We don't even associate very much anymore, because everybody's... constantly worried. And you're always worried.*

**Valeria Steele,**  
Elk View Estates, West Virginia

## Water and sewage infrastructure failures

Water and sewage main breaks and leaks led to standing water which damaged homes and contributed to mold growth and mosquito infestation. Residents reported frustration with the smell in and around their homes. Some residents complained of respiratory health issues and skin infections after coming into contact with the water or pesticides used to treat mosquito infestation.

*My child ended up with MRSA, [methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus] impetigo and some other bacterial infections... Everybody [pediatricians] just kept feeding her antibiotics and creams, trying to get it to [go away] and it wasn't. And now she has a weak immune system because of it. Every time she gets sick, it's horrible. A cold is literally like a flu to her.*

**Jenny,**  
River Grove Mobile Home Park, Michigan

## Broken and barricaded roads

Poor road conditions likely increased risks and injuries from trips and falls, particularly among elderly residents. Residents also worried for the safety of children on their bikes and skateboards. Residents believed that obstacles in the road, such as new homes parked on main roads, created barriers for emergency personnel.

*It's very hard. I have to walk with a walker or a cane, and there's potholes all over the road. There's debris in the road. They just don't maintain nothing.*

**Ruth,**  
North Morris Estates, Michigan



## Overgrown trees and brush

Trees, grass, and brush growing with little maintenance have fostered mosquito infestation, allergy exacerbation, and mold growth. Some residents described overgrown trees that have punctured their roofs and even fallen through homes, contributing to mold growth and respiratory health conditions.

*Every time it's raining, [my daughter's] roof in her bedroom leaks. She worries that the trees are going to come through the roof. It is a horrible existence that every time you know there's high winds or hard rain, you worry what's going to happen.*

**Kym,**  
Shadow Wood Mobile Home Park, West Virginia

## Neglected community amenities

Community amenities like swimming pools and clubhouses have been closed. Residents reported how these closures have limited opportunities for exercise and socializing with neighbors, which have important impacts on their wellness.

*When we lost our clubhouse, we lost the pool, I think it took away us being able to get out and exercise... We haven't been connecting, really, since we quit gathering at the clubhouse, because we were getting out there and getting to know each other... I met my two friends out there.*

**Martie,**  
North Morris Estates, Michigan

## Additional hazardous living conditions among renters

Residents who rented their homes from Homes of America described a range of habitability issues in their homes: nonfunctional kitchen appliances, heating and air conditioning issues, leaks and mold growth, and structurally unsound walls and floors, which likely worsened food insecurity, respiratory health and mental health.

*Living in a place where you are being farmed [exploited to produce profit] destroys you.*

**Lainey,**  
Lake Suzanne Mobile Home Park, Illinois

Homes of America residents want what we all want: safe, affordable, and stable homes where we are treated with dignity and respect. Holding Homes of America accountable to these basic healthy housing standards will require bold action to build resident power and curtail corporate greed. Policymakers at all levels of government have a critical opportunity to pass and enforce the following policies to combat unchecked corporate power and keep residents safe, healthy, and housed:

## Policy Recommendations

1

**Strengthen housing standards to keep residents safe in their homes:**

Pass and enforce strong housing standards like licensing requirements, regular inspections, and accountability mechanisms to ensure homes are safe and habitable

2

**Protect residents from exploitation:**

Pass rent regulations and good-cause eviction policies, and prohibit retaliation and unfair or discriminatory practices

3

**Promote and resource community-friendly ownership:**

Provide funding and pass policies that enable residents to transition from corporate to community-friendly models of ownership

4

**Address the root cause by limiting corporate speculation:**

Enact protective zoning regulations, impose portfolio caps, divest resources, and increase taxes on speculative investments to deter corporate profiteering

With rising costs of living and growing housing insecurity straining millions of Americans, **this is the moment to treat housing as a fundamental right and building block of community health, not a commodity exploited for profit.**

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Graphic design by Raina Wellman

Front cover: An abandoned manufactured home at Shadow Wood Mobile Home Park in West Virginia. Photo taken January 2024.

HIP transforms the field of public health to center equity and builds collective power with social justice movements.

Manufactured Housing Action (MHAction) empowers manufactured housing residents to build and win local, state, and national issue campaigns that protect and strengthen the long-term viability and affordability of their communities.

*This report is part two of a series on Homes of America. Part one, [Vulture Wars: Alden Global Capital's Assault on Manufactured Housing Residents](#), covers Homes of America's impact on financial abuses, and was published by Manufactured Housing Action and Private Equity Stakeholder Project in September 2024.*

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HIP's approach to research is rooted in sharing and building power in partnership with grassroots community organizing groups. We view power-building and power-sharing as a core strategy to achieving health and racial equity, with a focus on building power in communities most harmed by structural inequities and racism. To learn more about our research approach, check out [HIP's Research Code of Ethics](#).

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