



# HOME SICK:

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

### Manufactured housing in Illinois: A crucial source of affordable housing

- Illinois has approximately 125,000 manufactured homes, the 16th highest in the nation.<sup>1-3</sup>
- These communities are a crucial source of affordable housing for hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans with low or fixed incomes, including immigrants, families with children, seniors, and people with disabilities.<sup>2,4</sup>
- Corporate investors are buying up Illinoisans' manufactured homes and communities, following a playbook to maximize profit by imposing steep rent increases and fees and neglecting maintenance.<sup>5-7</sup>
- Now is the time to stop the health harms of these investors by empowering local voters to decide how to best stop egregious rent hikes and keep homes healthy, as proposed by the Let the People Lift the Ban Act.<sup>8</sup>

## New research finds health harms in investor-owned communities

Homes of America LLC purchased at least 10 manufactured home communities in Illinois between 2021 and 2022. Residents have expressed concerns that the company has raised rents, imposed additional fees, and delayed maintenance requests.<sup>7,9</sup> Manufactured Housing Action and Human Impact Partners' research, based on **in-depth interviews with 20 residents** and **housing code inspections from 10 communities**, documents unhealthy housing conditions in Homes of America owned communities. Residents described **mental and physical health harms they attributed to their housing conditions, including gastrointestinal issues, respiratory health symptoms, infections, and injuries**. Read the full report here, [HOME SICK: Uncovering the health harms in Homes of America's manufactured housing communities](#).

# Key Findings

- **Rent hikes, eviction threats, and manipulation:**

Residents have complained that Homes of America has increased rents between 40% and 200% in some communities and added new fees.<sup>7,10</sup> Residents described feeling powerless, manipulated, trapped and stressed, and reported associated health effects including vomiting, migraines, fluctuations in weight, high blood pressure, depression, and anxiety. Rent burden can shorten one's lifespan — increasing mortality rates by as much as 16-20%.<sup>11</sup>

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

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

- **Poor drinking water quality:** Several communities were found in violation of water standards by regulatory agencies, and contaminants like lead and bacteria were discovered, which can contribute to residents' gastrointestinal health, skin issues and infections.<sup>12</sup>

*We need to know...when you're having some kind of water issues, because I've stressed to them not knowing that contaminated water when it fills with the dialysate, yeah, it can cause death. It can be fatal.*

**Danielle and Darren,**  
*Residents of Lake Suzanne Mobile Home Park who run a dialysis machine and depend on clean and predictable water access*

- **Water shutoffs:** Some communities experienced water shutoffs lasting hours to days or weeks. Residents reported experiencing stress and disruptions in the ability to perform daily tasks like personal hygiene, cooking, using medical devices and childcare.

- **Water and sewage infrastructure failures:** Several communities experienced water line breaks and leaks that led to standing water, mold growth, and home damage, possibly contributing to respiratory health issues. Presence of mold has been associated with asthma symptoms, including asthma-related hospitalizations in children.<sup>13</sup>
- **Vacant homes and debris:** Unoccupied homes and trash created safety hazards and attracted pests and rodents. Residents feared risk of infectious disease and attacks from stray animals. The emptiness also heightened residents' feelings of isolation.

- **Broken and barricaded roads:** Poor road and infrastructure maintenance likely increased risks and injuries from trips and falls, particularly among elderly residents.
- **Overgrown trees and brush:** Overgrown vegetation fostered mosquito infestations and likely exacerbated allergies. Some residents reported trees puncturing or falling through their roofs.
- **Neglected community amenities:** Amenities like swimming pools and clubhouses in several communities have been closed, which residents say has limited opportunities for exercise and socializing with neighbors.
- **Additional hazardous living conditions among renters:** Renters described habitability issues in their homes like nonfunctional 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. Research on poor housing quality links extreme indoor temperatures with an increased risk for respiratory conditions, high blood pressure, cognitive difficulty, mental health disorders, and infections.<sup>14,15</sup>

Homes of America residents want what we all want: **safe, affordable, and stable homes** where they are treated with dignity and respect. To protect residents from ongoing harm, HIP and MHAction call on policymakers at all levels to take immediate action.

## Policy Recommendations

- **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
- **Protect residents from exploitation:** Pass rent regulations, good-cause eviction policies, and prohibit retaliation and unfair or discriminatory practices
- **Promote and resource community-friendly ownership:** Provide funding and pass policies that enable residents to transition from corporate to community-friendly models of ownership
- **Address the root cause by limiting corporate speculation:** Enact protective zoning regulations, impose portfolio caps, divest tax-payer resources, and increase taxes on speculative investments to deter corporate profiteering

# Remove Barriers to Keeping Residents Housed: Lift the Ban Campaign

Corporate landlords and other industry lobbyists have been highly successful in passing state bans to block local cities and counties from passing housing policies their residents support, as Illinois has done with rent stabilization. The Let the People Lift the Ban Act would empower local Illinois voters to decide how to best fight skyrocketing rents, keep communities healthy and affordable, and stop displacement. It would also allow tenants, like residents renting from Homes of America, to get their homes repaired and healthy without fearing retaliation.

*The original owners had a few simple rules and raised lot rent maybe \$25 every 3-4 years. Then these idiots came in. Homes of America bought the place, and oh, has it changed! **They hit us right away with a 65% increase between lot rent and new charges and fees.** Renters are being gouged even more, paying outrageous rent.*

**Rick Smith,**

*Resident at Lake Suzanne Mobile Home Park interviewed by Private Equity Stakeholder Project for their report Vulture Wars: Alden Global Capital's Assault on Manufactured Housing Residents*

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.

## Citations

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