



## ONE TOUCH RHODE ISLAND- AN OVERVIEW



### BACKGROUND

Unhealthy homes can create unhealthy families. Asthma rates among children in Rhode Island are 40% higher than the national average,<sup>1</sup> yet 40% of all asthma attacks are brought on by fixable environmental triggers in the home.<sup>2</sup> Hospitalizations for asthma cost \$10,608 per child, and over \$21 million annually.<sup>3</sup> However, the cost of addressing these home triggers can be hard for families to manage, when over one-third of Rhode Island homeowners spend nearly 50% of their income on mortgage and utilities.<sup>4</sup> In Rhode Island, 1 in 12 children under age 6 has lead poisoning which can cause reductions in IQ, speech and language problems, learning disabilities, and attention deficit disorder and other affects. However, the cost of treating lead poisoning outweighs the cost of prevention, on the order of billions of dollars.<sup>5</sup> Young children living in homes where families can't afford winter fuel bills are 30% more likely to have hospital visits than children in similar homes with lower energy bills.<sup>6</sup>

### OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE HEALTHY HOMES

Opportunities exist to help Rhode Island health, housing and energy programs to more efficiently target high risk families and deliver critical services. While many Rhode Island agencies are working on parts of the healthy homes issues, we need more connectivity. Many statewide healthy housing programs—such as energy services from National GRID and lead mitigation services from Rhode Island Housing—have trouble reaching their target audiences. The Department of Health seeks opportunities to work more closely with agencies offering interventions to help children and families reduce risk and pursue healthier lives.

### A TOOL TO CONNECT HEALTHY HOMES RESOURCES

In order to better connect healthy homes efforts, the Rhode Island Alliance for Healthy Homes (RIAHH) at HousingWorksRI has created a powerful resource for healthy housing to Rhode Island. *One Touch™: Creating Healthy and Energy Efficient Housing* connects health, energy, and housing home visiting and repair programs to cost-effectively improve health outcomes and reduce home energy use. Government and non-profits partners that “touch” homes use a common home “Check Up” tool and electronic referral system to identify conditions that trigger referrals to community partners or change the services delivered. Through One Touch, partners assess *household health interests and housing needs in order to initiate referrals to community partners. No private health information is shared through this tool.*\*

#### Proven Results:

- Programs build effective coalitions to cost-effectively deliver services and support mutual goals;
- Programs ease intake, reduce administrative costs, and gain access to outcome data; and
- Clients, particularly high health care utilizers and energy users, get the help they need.

Experience in other One Touch communities indicates that 1 in every 3 homes benefits by a referral to another One Touch partner. This accessible and customized referral network will help facilitate such integrated service delivery and identify sustainable program changes to support streamlined and targeted service delivery.



\*Contact information is shared only if clients consent. All data is stored on a secured cloud based system. The only people with access to the information are those receiving referrals and the program administrator (RIAHH). See: <https://www.surveygizmo.com/survey-software-features/security-reliability/>.

*OneTouch Rhode Island* was developed in partnership with Tohn Environmental Strategies, and with support from the RI Department of Health and Rhode Island Housing.

<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island Kids Count FactBook, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Beyond Health Care: New Directions to a Healthier America Report.” April 2009

<sup>3</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> HousingWorksRI of RWU. Housing and Intersections: 2016 Housing Fact Book.

<sup>5</sup> Pew Charitable Trust. *Partnership for America’s Economic Success: Cutting Lead Poisoning and Public Costs.* February, 2010. Accessed online August, 2017: [http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/assets/2010/02/22/063\\_10\\_paes-costs-of-lead-poisoning-brief\\_web.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/assets/2010/02/22/063_10_paes-costs-of-lead-poisoning-brief_web.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Frank, D. et al, 2007, Heat or Eat: The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program and Nutritional and Health Risks Among Children Less than 3 Years of Age, *Pediatrics*.