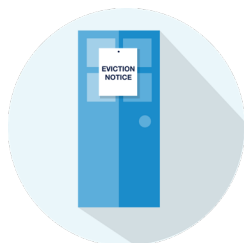




Limiting Evictions Can Reduce Preterm Births

Background

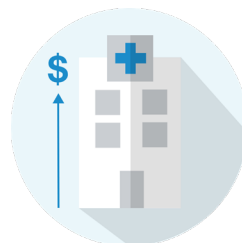
Evictions experienced by pregnant mothers increase the risk of preterm births and hospital utilization.



Severe housing instability in the form of evictions is associated with **1.2** times the risk of birthing a preterm birth infant, and **1.6** times the risk of an extended hospital stay after birth (1).



Preterm births can have long-lasting impacts on infant health, increasing the risk of developmental disabilities, infection, jaundice, brain hemorrhage and respiratory distress (2).



Healthcare expenditures for preterm infants can also result in extreme cost burdens for families and the medical care system, as the average cost of medical expenses for a preterm infant is \$76,153 (3).



Racial inequities impact the relationship between housing instability and infant health, as women of color are at increased risk of eviction and disparities in birth outcomes (4). Black women experience the highest rates of eviction and infant mortality (5).

Policy Recommendations

Many pregnant women in the Bay Area lack adequate legal protections and support in order to avoid evictions and protect their health. Policy recommendations were developed by speaking with community members impacted by this issue, community-based housing organizations, researchers studying these impacts, as well as employees working in Bay Area government services.



1. Provide More Affordable Housing in the Bay Area Market

There is a high-level need to increase market supply of affordable units to reduce the rent burden in the Bay Area, and distribute cash assistance to offset the cost of rent.

- Designate funding sources to construct more affordable units.
- Expand the pool of funding for rental assistance.
- Forgive rental debt accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic.



2. Enhance Legal Protections for Pregnant Women

Developing legal resources to help pregnant women avoid evictions in an essential step in reducing the rate of preterm births.

- Enforce existing protections.
 - Designate a hotline to report landlords not complying with legal protections.
 - Establish an Oversight Board to review instances of discrimination based on familial status and pregnancy.
- Provide more comprehensive education of tenant rights for tenants and landlords.
- Expand Right to Counsel laws outside of San Francisco, which provide a free attorney for anyone served with an eviction notice.



3. Reduce the Administrative Burden of Receiving Assistance

Tenants often find it difficult to locate information on how to receive rental assistance or other services, based on differing eligibility guidelines in the Bay Area by location. Streamlining the assistance process will allow more pregnant women to receive services.

- Create a centralized set of resources: one website or phone number to contact.
- Hire more bilingual staff and navigators to assist potential clients.
- Allow for more flexibility regarding documentation and eligibility rules.

To learn more about the impact of evictions on preterm births, please contact:

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(3) Andrew L. Beam et al., "Estimates of Healthcare Spending for Preterm and Low-Birthweight Infants in a Commercially Insured Population: 2008–2016," *Obstetrical & Gynecological Survey* 75, no. 12 (February 26, 2020): pp. 717-718, <https://doi.org/10.1097/ogx.0000000000000878>

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