

# A Health Impact Assessment of the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Project

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Continual decrease in public housing funding

Lack of maintenance has resulted in dilapidated and uninhabitable units nationwide

Several housing relocation programs have been implemented (HOPE VI, Gautreaux, Moving to Opportunity)



Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) project is a proposed federal policy to address the chronic underfunding of public housing

Pilot program with 60,000 units

Investment of private resources into a public asset

Potential for ownership by a non-profit or for-profit organization

Potential for increased reliance on vouchers without any new vouchers created

Potential for increased, and stricter, residency standards

No guarantee of one-to-one replacement of hard units if demolition and renovation takes place

Limited discussion of resident organizing and organizations

Significant discretion left to HUD Secretary and many aspects dependent on funding

## National Organizations

Human Impact Partners

Advancement Project

National People's Action

## Local Organizations

Communities United for Action (Cincinnati)

Community Voices Heard (New York)

Good Ole Lower East Side (New York)

People Organized for Westside Renewal (Los Angeles)

Causa Justa::Just Cause (Oakland)

2.3 million people live in federally-funded public housing

Increased need for public housing, yet not enough high-quality units

Past public housing funding programs have had mixed results

Housing has clear and documented impacts on health

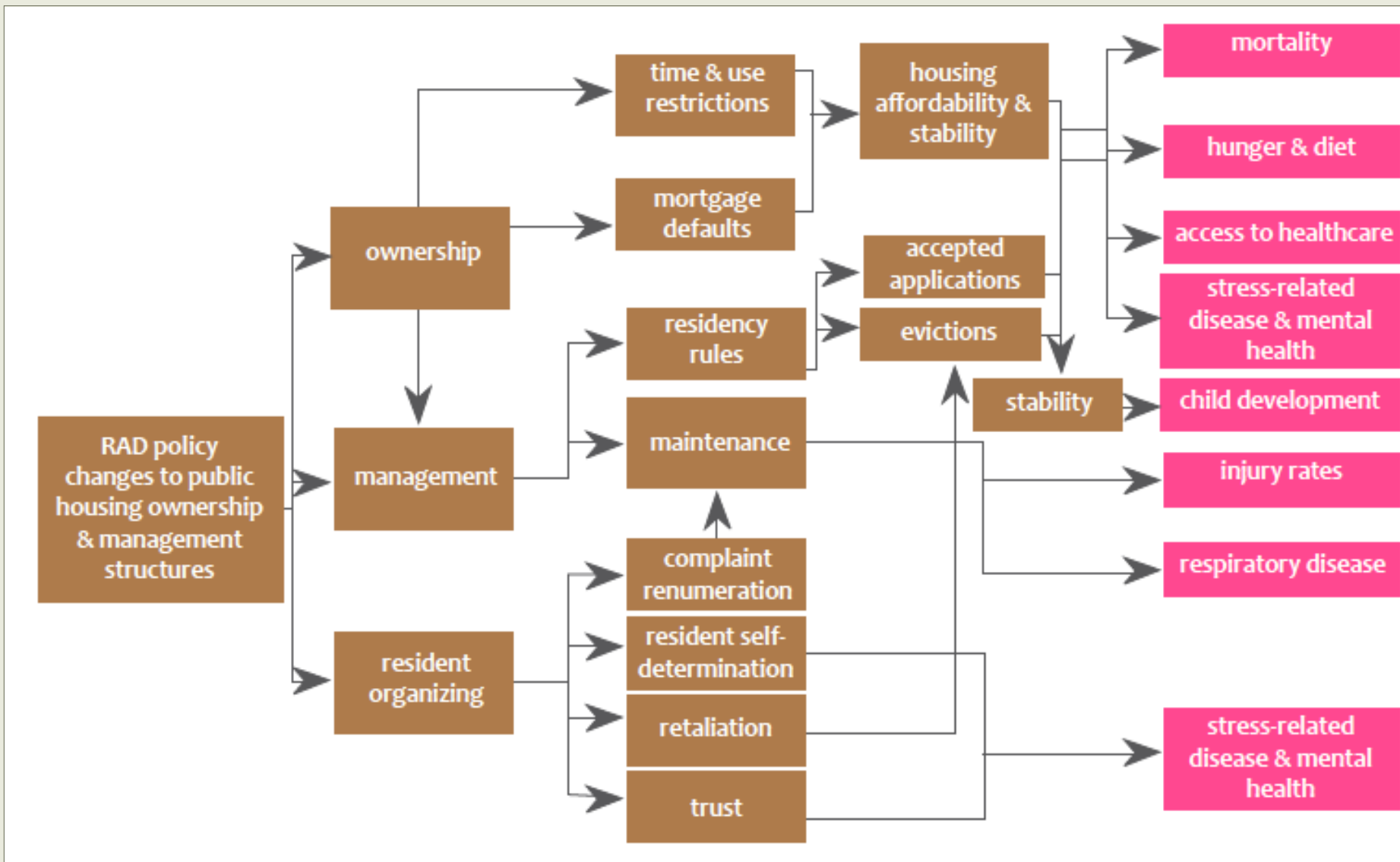
No health analysis was being considered in legislative debates

Partners felt the need for a new frame in the ongoing discussion and were enthusiastic about including a health lens

Funding was available



*Decision: Public health impacts are plausible and HIA could add value*



Additional pathways for housing quality & affordability and for social cohesion

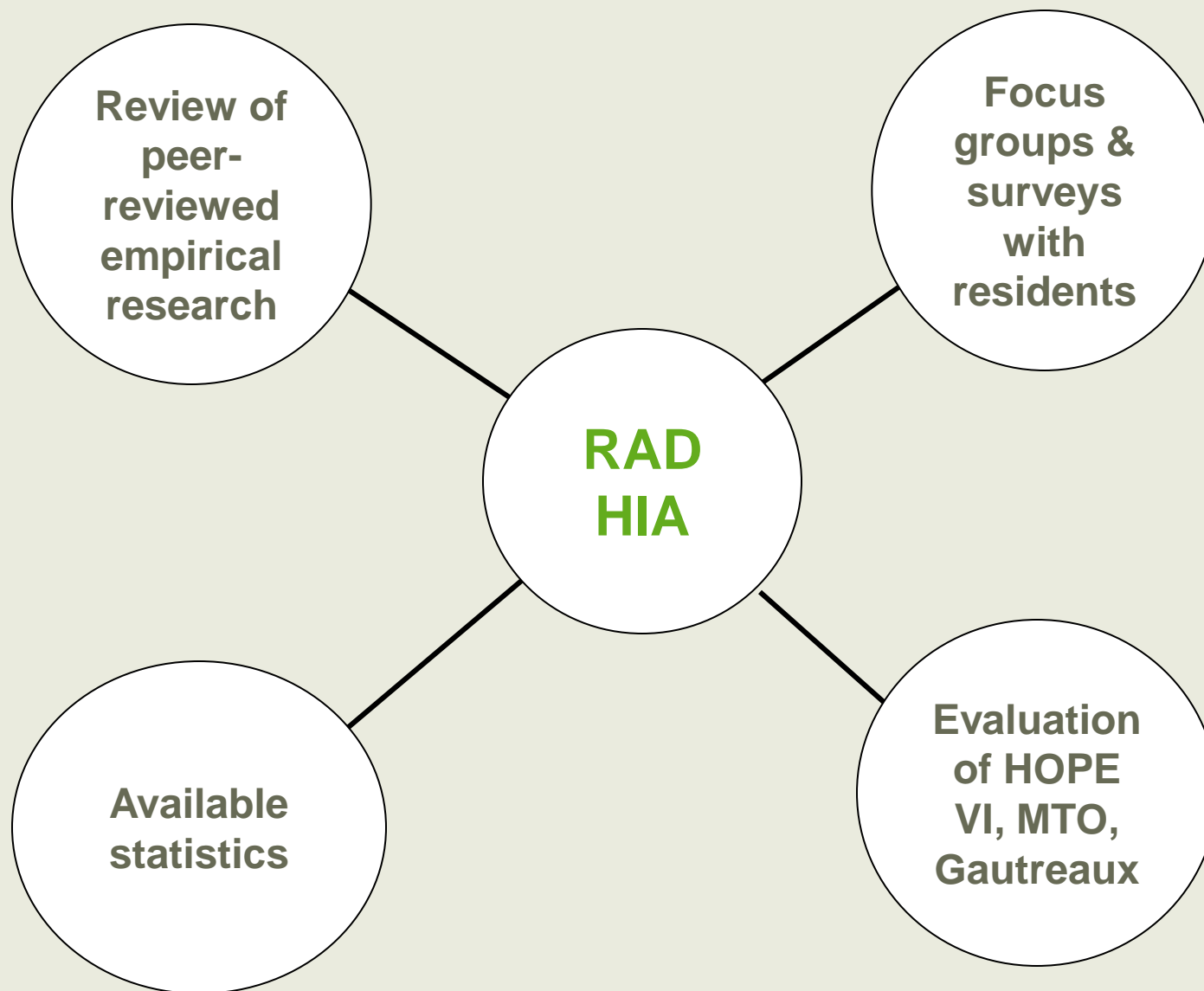
## How might RAD impact:

Type of management, evictions, and resident organizing

Housing quality, affordability, and stability

Social cohesion and social capital







Public housing budgets have decreased by 48% while funding for vouchers has increased by 403%.

Increasingly, the public housing stock is privately managed. Few studies evaluate the quality of private-management and evictions.

HUD estimates capital needs as \$21 billion for all public housing.

HUD study found that 7.1 million households had “worst case” housing needs in 2011 – an increase of 42% since 2001.

Numerous obstacles make transition into the private market challenging, and public housing provides residential stability.

HIA focus group participants state that eviction is a main reason why people move out of public housing and that they are living with high degrees of stress from multiple sources and crime.

Relocation programs have had mixed results with racial and ethnic integration and poverty deconcentration.

# RAD Assessment – Impact Analysis

HEALTH DETERMINANT	IMPACT	MAGNITUDE (HOW MANY?)	SEVERITY (HOW BAD?)	EVIDENCE STRENGTH	UNCERTAINTIES
Type of Management	~	Minor- Moderate	Low-Moderate	••	Ability to informally implement stricter residency rules
Eviction	-	Moderate	Moderate	••	
Resident Organizing	~	Minor	Low	••	Resident organizing protections
Housing Quality	+	Moderate-Major	High	••	Strength of eviction protections
Affordability	-	Moderate-Major	Moderate	••	
Stability	-	Moderate-Major	Moderate	••	Assuming funds target the most distressed housing stock
Social cohesion/ Social networks	-	Major	Moderate	••	
Segregation	~	Minor- Moderate	Low-Moderate	•	How time and use restrictions will be implemented
Concentration of poverty	~	Minor- Moderate	Low-Moderate	•	
Crime	+	Moderate-Major	High	••	Unclear the extent to which tenant-based vouchers will be distributed
Stress	~	Moderate-Major	High	••	

Housing quality and crime could improve with RAD

Framing of poor health outcomes within the low-income, public housing resident population

Looking at poverty deconcentration itself was sensitive

Relocation programs have had mixed results with racial and ethnic integration and poverty deconcentration

HIA focus group participants state that eviction is a main reason why people move out of public housing and that they are living with high degrees of stress from crime

Confusing that residents feel that public housing provides a buffer against stress (e.g., b/c of stability) but then also a source of stress (e.g., b/c of crime & ambiguity about housing stability)

HIA report

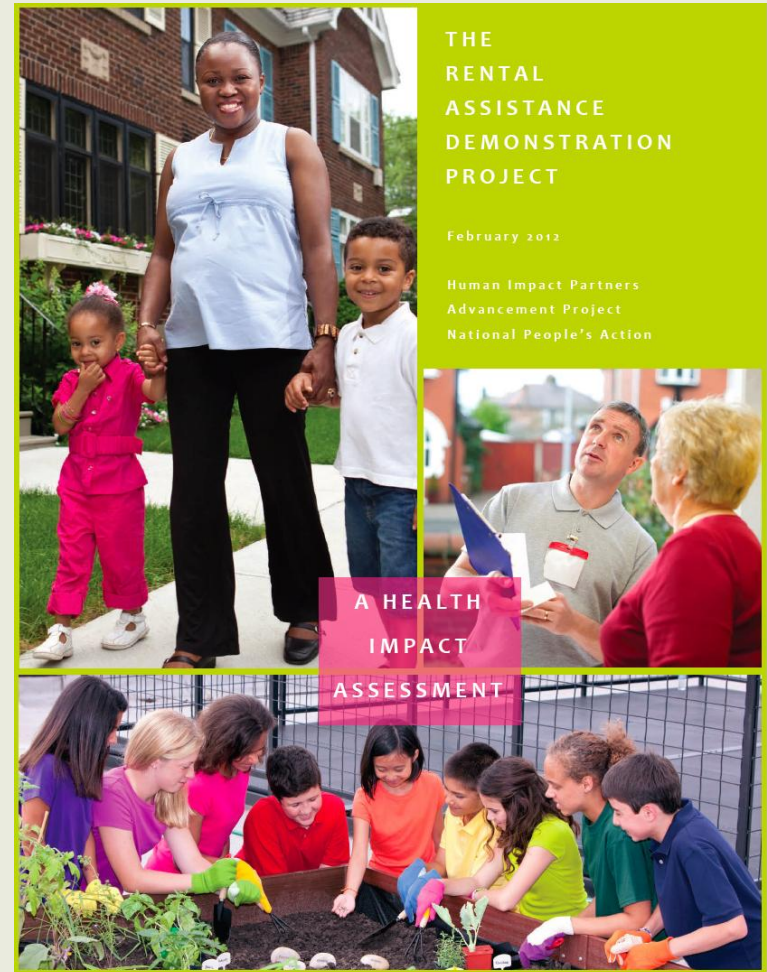
Summary of findings

Meetings with HUD

Meetings with legislators

Press release/media campaign

Local press and meetings with  
Housing Authorities



Policy was a moving target

Funding level limited the amount of existing conditions data collected

Advocacy partners and research partners disagreed in a few cases on conclusions/findings

The ability to quantify some of the health impacts would have made this HIA stronger

Research in many cases did not lead clearly to one conclusion

## Outcomes

2011 bill passed before HIA was released

Impact on RAD implementation and regulations is ongoing\*;  
Since RAD is a pilot, HIA will be used until 2015 (end of pilot) to evaluate and monitor RAD's effects

Brought a new advocacy perspective to public housing partners; HIA is a new tool for advocates, organizers, and residents to use in local, state, and national policy discussions

First HIA of a federal housing policy proposal – elevated health in a discussion that did not typically include health

Health and HIA was an ongoing talking point in meetings with HUD