Housing and Health Written Statement for the World Health Assembly
The Network: Towards Unity For Health | Population Health Taskforce

More than one-third of the world’s population has been under lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. With many people confined to their residences, the link between housing and health bears reexamining.

TUFH respectfully submits these recommendations for improving population well-being through safe and healthy housing.

Recommendations
I. Support Co-op and Co-Housing Opportunities - Co-op housing and Co-housing exists on all continents, homing many millions of people in a third space between renting and owning their dwelling. These models increase access to stable, sustainable, lower cost housing while giving residents greater autonomy and authority.

II. Expand the Use of International Cooperation to Address Home-Based Health Threats – The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint is one of the few multinational initiatives aimed at making homes healthier. Expanding the Alliance’s mandate to include other sources of lead would add supplemental protection. The Alliance serves as a model for new international coalitions focused on other indoor hazards, like tobacco smoke, radon, or asthma triggers.

III. Promote the Use of Community Health Outreach Workers to Deliver In-Home Environmental Education – The WHO’s guidelines recognize the capacity of community health workers to enhance health promotion activities in family planning and other areas. Outreach workers are also effective in delivering education that reduces exposure to a wide array of indoor environmental health threats, such as poor ventilation, and unintentional injuries.

IV. Continue to Support the Establishment of Healthy Housing as a Human Right – International documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have long recognized a right to adequate housing, but few member states have adopted a rights-based housing model. COVID-19 demonstrates that *adequate* housing is not enough. Housing must also promote good health.