



COUNTY OF MONTEREY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Elsa Jimenez, Director of Health

Administration
Behavioral Health

Clinic Services
Emergency Medical Services
Environmental Health/Animal Services

Public Health
Public Administrator/Public Guardian

10 May 2017

Honorable Mayor and Council
City of Salinas
200 Lincoln Avenue
Salinas, CA 93901

Dear Honorable Mayor and Council:

Monterey County Health Department (MCHD) staff collaborate with multiple sectors through its Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach. HiAP is an approach to include health considerations in policy making across different sectors that influence health, such as transportation, agriculture, land use, public safety, education, and housing. We facilitate a Salinas HiAP Advisory Committee. This Committee chose housing as one of its four priority focus areas because of the need faced by city residents.

High housing costs force families to overspend, overcrowd, live in unsafe homes, or uproot themselves from the community. On the other hand, access to quality affordable housing improves residential stability and the ability to accumulate savings. This reduces stress and related health problems, while spending less on housing allows families to spend more on nutritious food and health care. Affordable housing options also reduce the spread of infectious disease, noise, and stress due to overcrowding. The shortage of affordable housing takes the hardest toll on low-income and people of color - the groups that spend the highest portion of their income on housing. These groups in turn are most pressed with difficult financial decisions around where to live and how to budget their remaining income. Short and long-term consequences related to housing unaffordability contribute to health inequities in our communities. In 2014, Salinas was ranked as the 5th most unaffordable community in the country. Only 17% of the homes sold in the Salinas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) are affordable to households earning the median income. Nearly three quarters of lower income households in Salinas are paying more than 30% towards rent. The city of Salinas' Inclusionary Housing Ordinance is an opportunity to address the community's housing needs across all income groups and is a sound HiAP approach. Inclusionary housing ordinances are aimed at creating mixed income communities that are equitable and thriving for all residents. Over 140 local governments in California have implemented such a policy due to their effectiveness for generating affordable housing.

MCHD, through its HiAP work, sees the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance as one of many tools the City has to create more affordable housing. City staff has worked closely with developers and affordable housing advocates to create a balanced policy. We look forward to continuing our HiAP work in the city of Salinas around housing.

Sincerely,

Elsa Jimenez
Director of Health

cc: Carmen Gil, Meghan Hunter, Anastasia Wyatt, C. J. Valenzuela