

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS
POLICY STATEMENT*

PEDIATRIC PROBLEMS RELATED TO
DETERIORATED HOUSING

THERE has been increasing concern by several groups about the plight of children whose lives are harmed by their housing environment, which results in an increased risk of accidents, infectious diseases, and in particular, lead poisoning. The Committee on Environmental Hazards has also been vitally concerned with these problems, and several of its members have served as expert witnesses in congressional hearings on related bills. However, efforts up to the present have been insufficient to alleviate illnesses which, though ill-defined, are clearly preventable.

The Committee on Environmental Hazards recommends that the Academy encourage national and local governments to support, at the economic and law enforcement levels (including health departments), those measures necessary to alleviate the problems of childhood lead poisoning. Deteriorated housing is an essential feature of lead poisoning, and it is related to the in-

creased risk of accidents and the incidence of infectious diseases. Action is needed to urge landlords, by whatever means possible, to improve those housing conditions which are a danger to the health of children. It may be economically unfeasible for landlords of deteriorated housing in inner cities to improve their buildings, and both legislative action and financial commitment from government may be necessary to bring about required action.

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