

9-20-01

Affordable housing scant in Mo. County

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As many as 30,000 Montgomery County residents may be out of luck when it comes to affordable housing.

Affordable housing is the county's most pressing need, according to a report by the Community Ministry of Montgomery County presented Monday to the council's Health and Human Services Committee.

"It's amazing to think it would be easier to provide access to health care than access to housing, but it's a need we have here," said committee chair and Council Member George Leventhal, D-at large.

Nearly 43,000 county residents are in distress because they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, testified one of the report's authors, Alice Levy.

More than 30,000 may be eligible for affordable housing — but only 2,250 participate in the program.

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27,633 children lack health insurance

52 percent of needy elderly not covered by Medicaid

■ 4,154 total homeless

"There was a huge lack of ... information," she said, and in many cases even service providers couldn't provide accurate records.

Under federal guidelines, a family of four is in poverty when its annual income is less than about \$18,000. Montgomery County's poor families need about \$60,000 to meet the most basic needs, Levy said.

"Other parts of the state would say, '\$60,000, that's really not needy,'" Leventhal said. "The need for affordable housing is the most crying need for the poor in Montgomery County."

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