Basic Access in Every New House

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The Status Quo: Barriers are the Norm—Even in New Houses!

Example: House with small step on the front—hard to retrofit.

Example: Narrow bathroom door.

The Goal: Basic Access in All New Houses (except the few unfeasible)

Example: Four townhouses in a row with zero-step entrances.

Example: Woman using wheelchair fitting through bathroom door.
Is it Only About Wheelchair Users?

Example 1: Woman with walker in her home; Example 2: Man on crutches passing through an ample door; Example 3: Delivery man bringing in heavy package on dolly.

No. It’s about safety at home for all people with long-term or temporary disabilities...And visiting in the homes of others: being at the party...And it’s convenient for all.

Barriers Cause Suffering

Example: Woman in nursing home although she would prefer to be in her own home
Example: Triangular warning sign showing figure falling down steps
Example: Wheelchair-user at bottom of front steps looking up through window at a child she cannot visit
Has Widespread Access Already Proved Practical?

Yes. Local Policies across the country have led to tens of thousands of houses built with basic access whether or not a resident currently has a disability.

Example: Expensive house with curved stone path leading to zero-step entrance

Example: Inexpensive bungalow with sidewalk leading to zero-step entrance

Example: House on flat lot

Example: lot and driveway steep, but easy entrance from top of driveway to house

Example: Detached single-family house with access

Example: Attached single-family houses (townhouses) with access
In spite of successes, the vast majority of new houses continue to be built with barriers.

**Low Financial Costs of Basic Access in New Construction**

- Wide interior doors and a zero-step entrance, built on concrete slab: $100 or less.
- Wide interior doors and a zero-step entrance, built over a basement: $600-800
  (Contact Concrete Change for costs statements by experienced builders)

**High Financial Costs of Continuing to Build Barriers**

- Typical costs of adding a zero-step entrance and widening doors on an existing house: $10,000 or more.
- Typical cost of one year in nursing home: $36,000, double occupancy.
- High medical costs of people who have developed mobility problems but lack resources to modify their unsafe houses: falls on entry steps, health consequences from lack of access to one’s own bathroom, injuries to caregivers lifting family members, etc.

More than half of houses built today will have a resident with a severe mobility impairment during the lifetime of the house. More than 90% of these houses will have a visitor with a severe mobility impairment.

*It is not possible to predict which houses.*

For more information, and to help create policies and practices that change the status quo, contact:

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