

Physicians for Social Responsibility- Los Angeles

# Healthy Homes Alliance Project

An IPM  
program in  
privately owned  
multi-unit  
housing



# Overview of Project

**Goal:** Address the overuse and misuse of pesticides to control pest infestations in substandard housing by increasing access to safer and more effective pest management methods via adoption of IPM practices by tenants, maintenance personnel and apartment managers/owners

## Overview of Objectives

- Work with 2-3 privately owned multi-unit housing owners/managers in Los Angeles
- Conduct an IPM intervention study in the 2-3 buildings
- Train apartment owners, tenants, maintenance personnel, organizers and *promotoras* on IPM
- Develop and implement a multilingual, multimedia public health information strategy for residents and apartment owners based on the implementation of the IPM intervention study

# Project Demographics

## Project Duration

September 2009-December 2011

## Project Partners

- **Project Coordinator:** PSR-LA
- **Outreach Technical Advisor:** HHC
- **Building Relationship:** Coalition for Economic Survival, Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, Inner City Law Center and Korean Immigrant Workers Alliance

## Project Demographics/Location

- South Los Angeles
  - Orchard Building- 1922
  - Hill Building-1916
- Highland Park-1989
- Mid-Wilshire-1929



# Process of Project

- Partnership between PSR-LA and the CBO's
- Project process
  1. Training to CBO's- *PSR-LA*
  2. Identification of Buildings- *CBO's*
  3. Education to tenants, managers, building owners, CBO's- *PSR-LA*
  4. Implementation of IPM project- *PSR-LA, CBO's, HHC and tenants*
  5. Data analysis- *PSR-LA*
  6. Policy Development and Communications-*PSR-LA*

# Pesticide Survey & Results



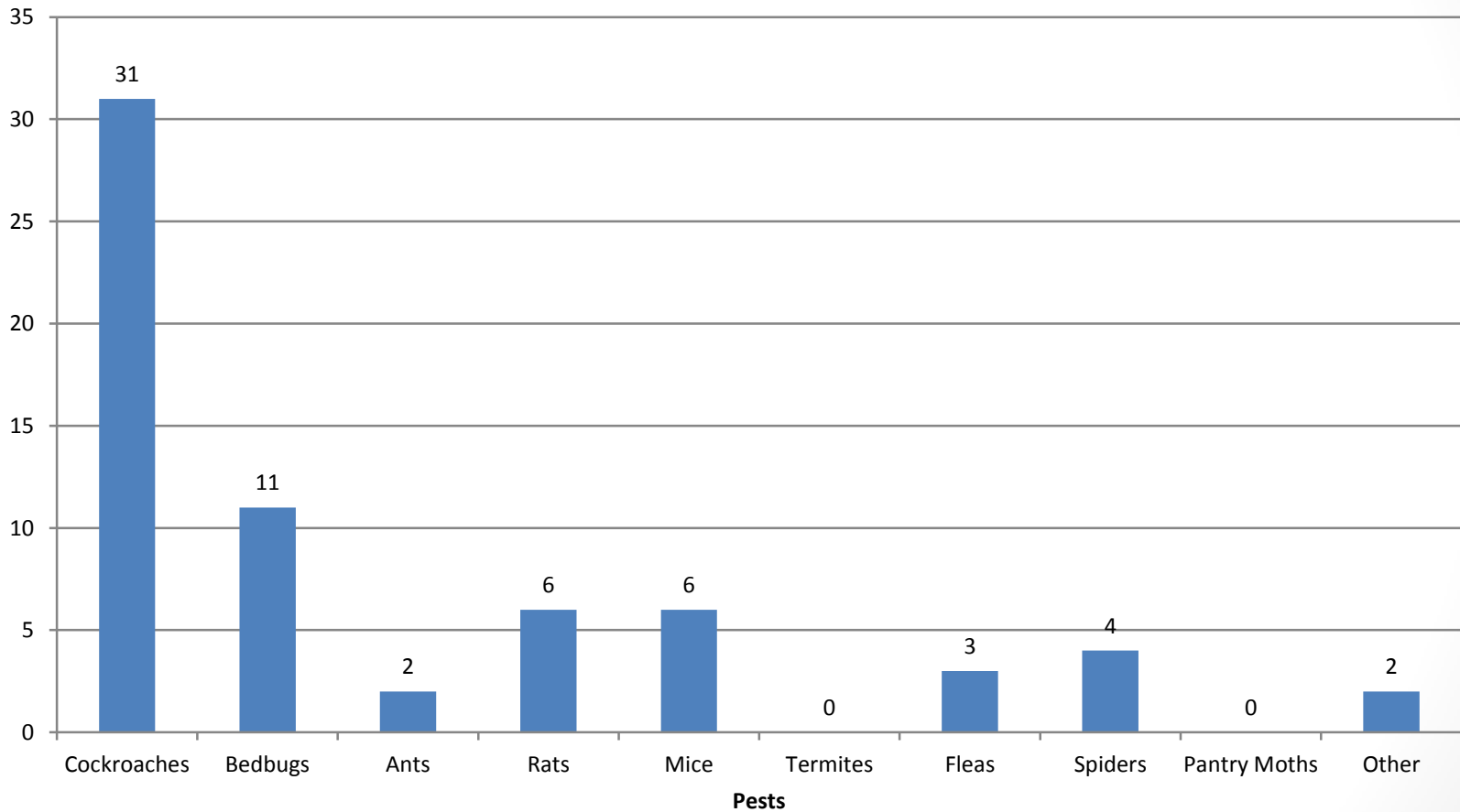
## Assessing Pesticide Use

# Pesticide Use Survey: Demographics

## 32 tenant surveys completed

- 7 from South Los Angeles (missing 3908 ½), April 2010, April 2011
  - Primarily monolingual Spanish speaking residents
  - All of the families had children under 18 years of age
  
- 7 from Highland Park, April 2011
  - Primarily monolingual Spanish speaking residents
  - Families with children under 18 years of age in 5 residences
  
- 18 from Mid-Wilshire, October 2010
  - Multi-ethnic building; Spanish, English, other languages
  - Families with children under 18 years of age in 3 residences

# Types of Pests



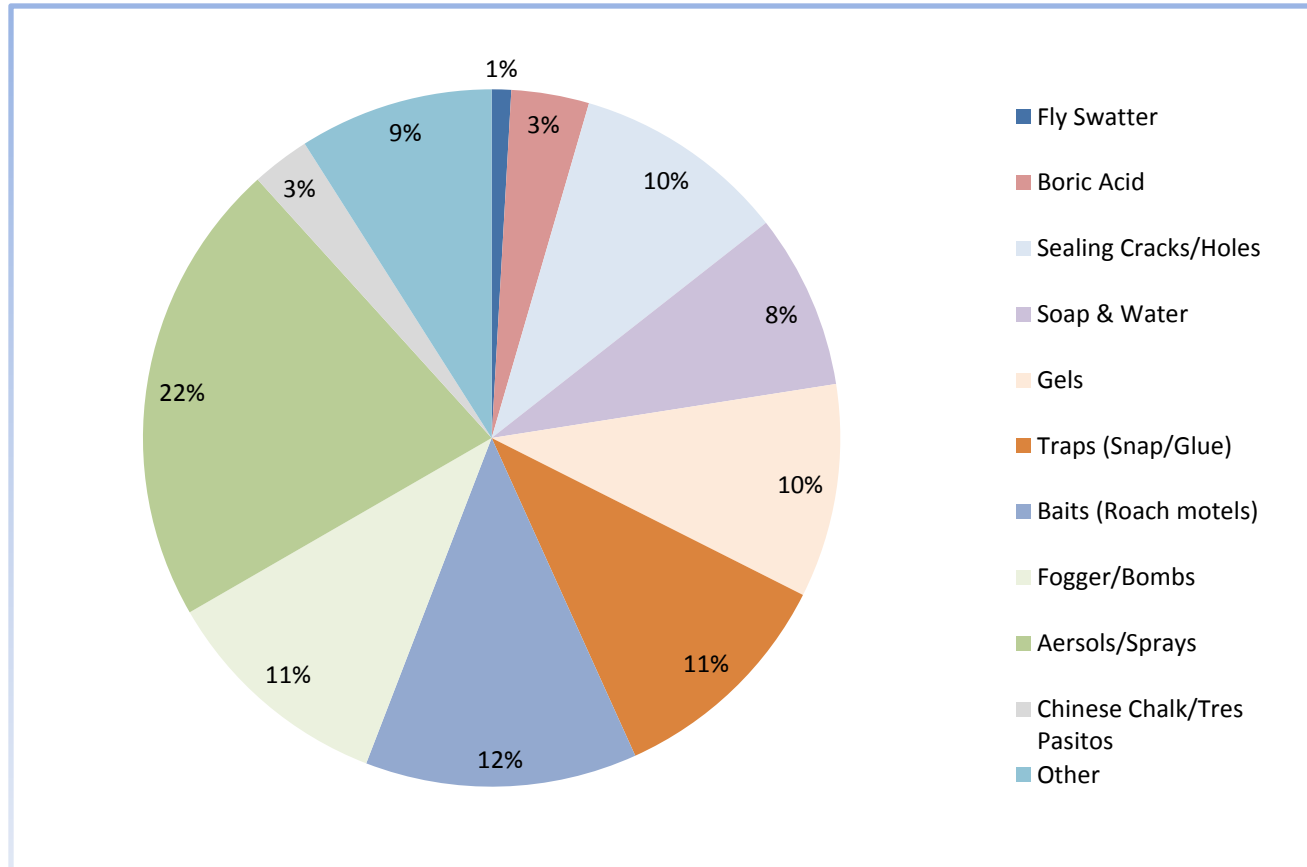
As of August 12 2011

# Methods Used to Eradicate Pests

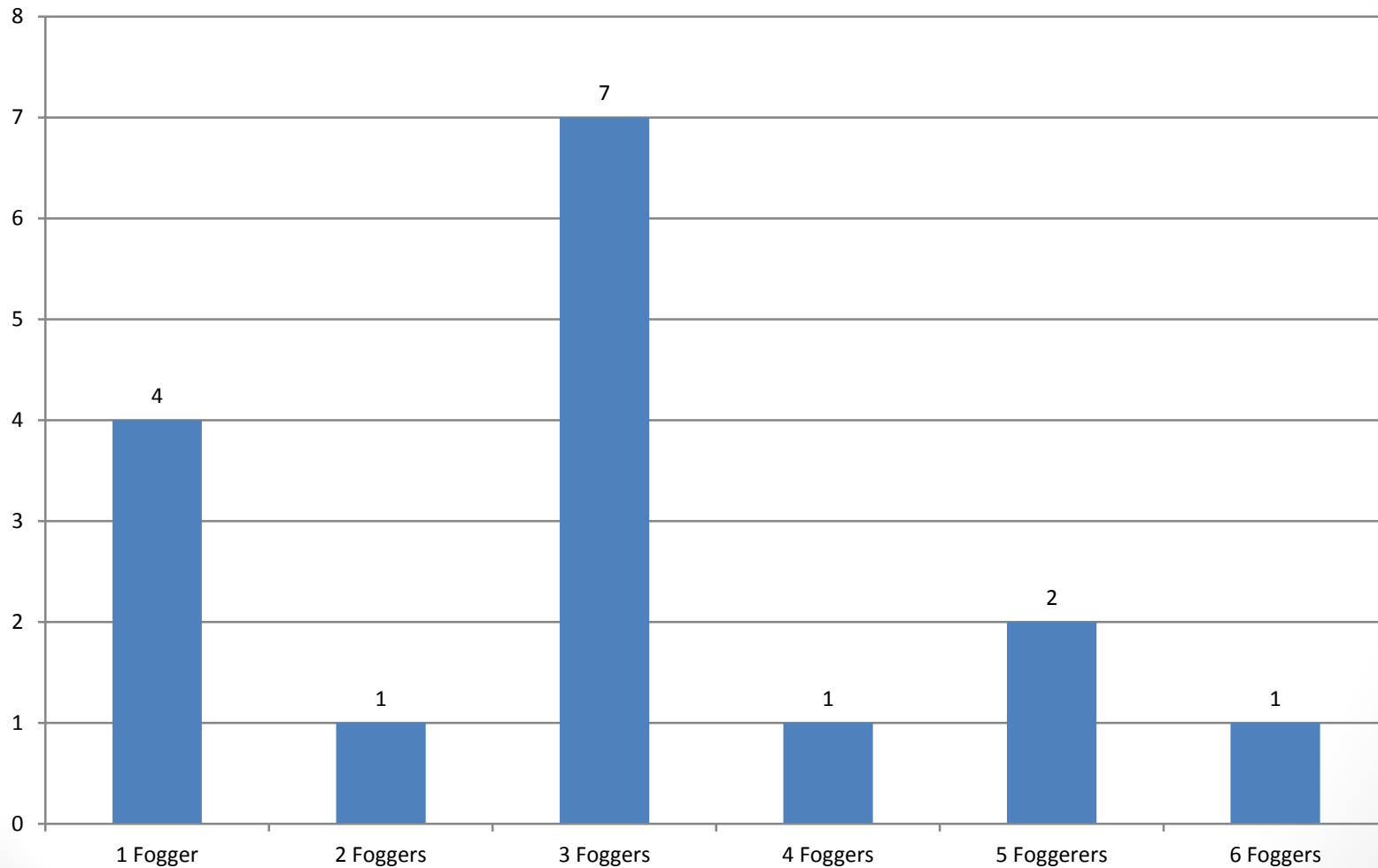




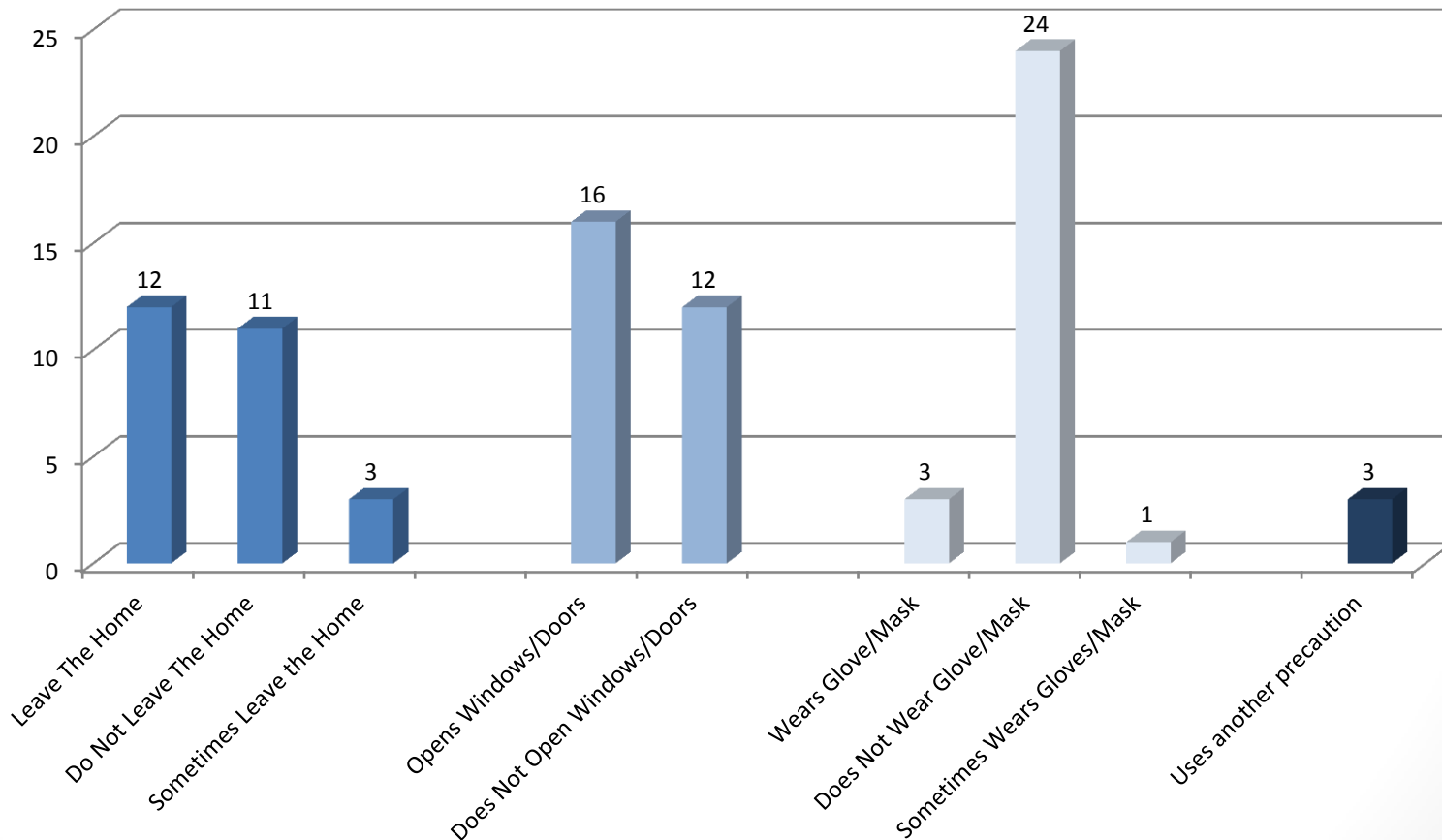
# Methods Used to Eradicate Pests



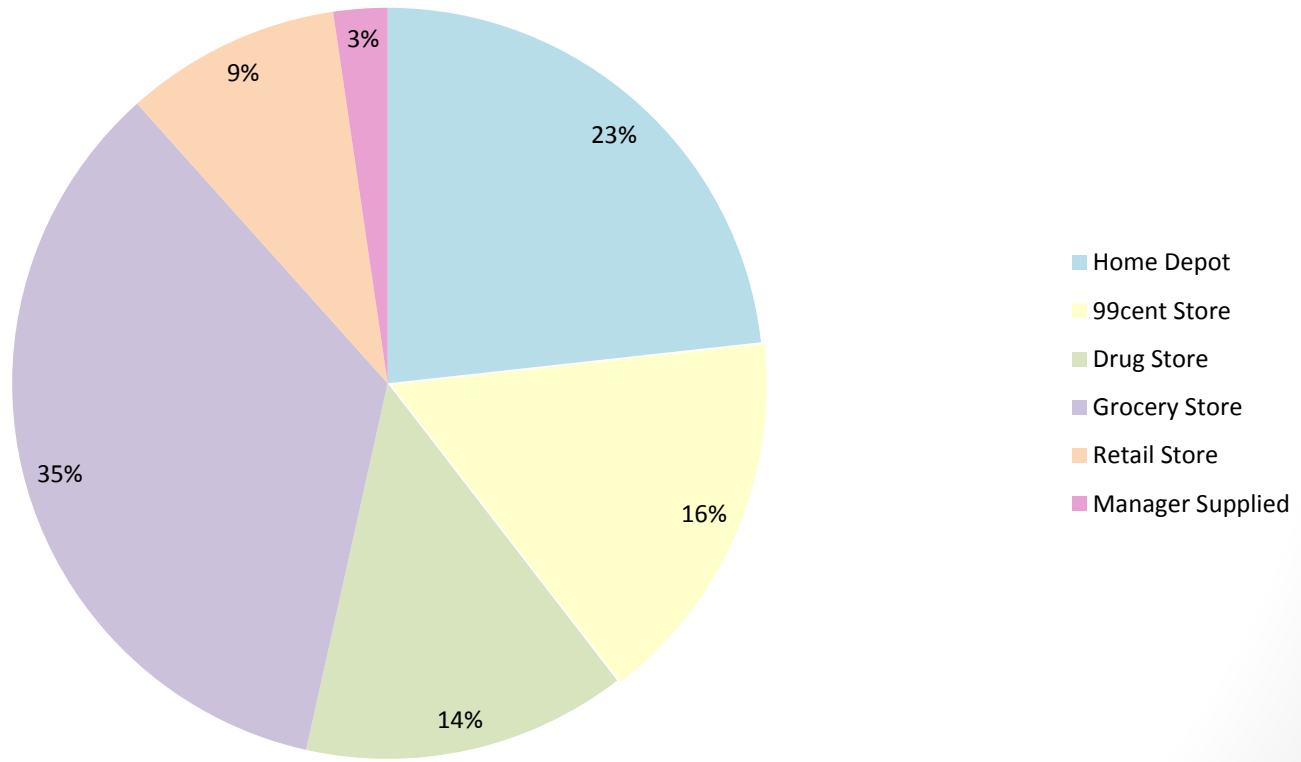
# Number of Units That Used 1 or Multiple Bombs/Foggers At One Time



# Safety Measures Taken When Using Pesticides



# Locations Where Pesticides Were Purchased

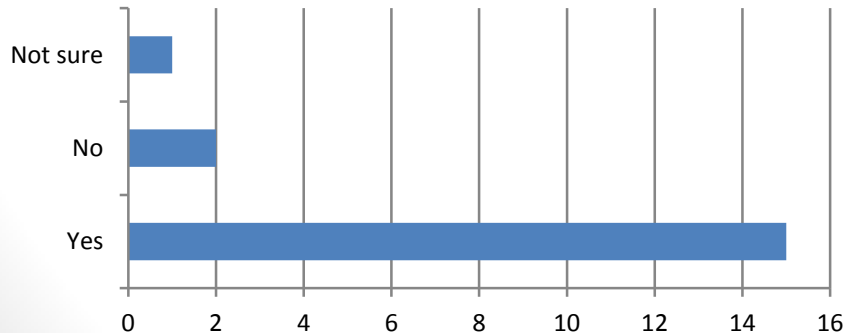


# Landlord/Manager Pesticide Application Questions

## Has the Landlord/Manager Sprayed or Fumigated for Pests?



## Does the landlord/manager inform you before spraying/applying pesticides?



## Where does the Manager Spray or Fumigate for Pests?

Locations	Frequency
Unit	10
Common Areas	4
Outside	1
Other Units	2

## How often does the building get sprayed or fumigated for pests?

Fumigation Method	Frequency
No fumigation	6
Once A Year	4
2x Times A Year	2
4x Times A Year	2
Monthly	3
Doesn't Know	8
Once In A While	1
Once In 3 Years	1
Only when requested	1
Every 2 Years	1

# Survey Conclusions

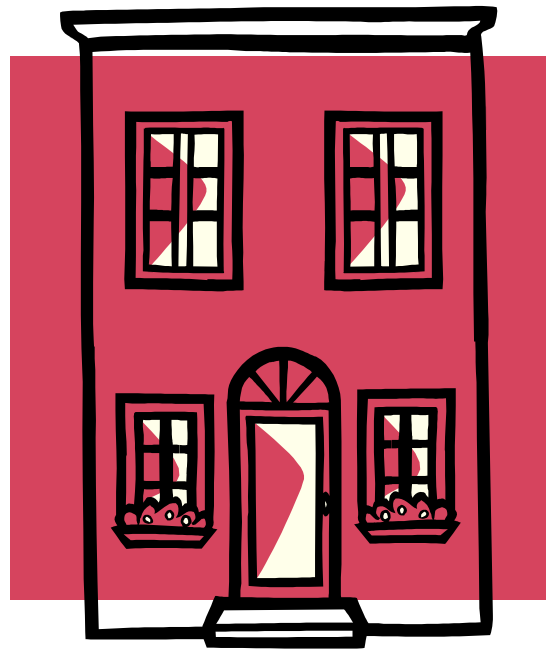
## Need for behavior change and education

- Assumption that using more pesticides is more effective
- Harsh products (like bleach) seem to be associated with effectiveness
- Direction and caution labels are not always read
- Most pesticide applications are conducted by tenants, not by building personnel
- Pesticide applications are perceived as the solution to pest problems, despite their ineffectiveness in eradicating pests

## Children's health is affected the most from pesticide use

- The majority of respondents felt that children were most affected by pesticide applications

# IPM Intervention Project Results



# Issues in the Buildings



← Uncovered & Broken Kitchen Fans →



Gaps between Kitchen Cabinets



Mice = entryway



External Water Pipes-  
Damaged and corroded



Cracks and Crevices-  
Hiding places for roaches

*Owners attempt  
to Repair*



# Fixing Leaky Faucets as Part of IPM



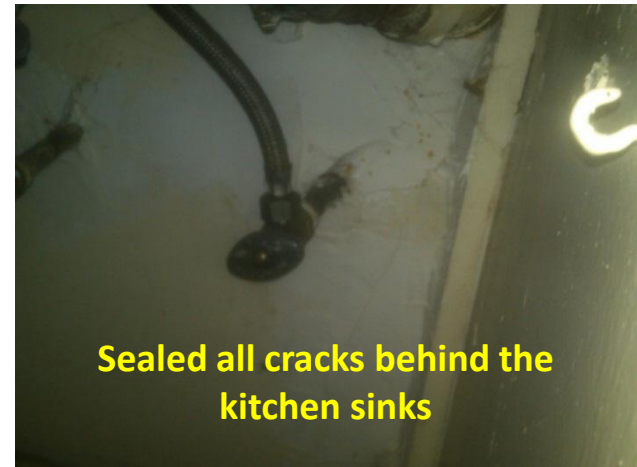
Tenants “fixing” the leak themselves

Owner making repairs to leaks



Paper absorbing the water leak inside a bathroom cabinet

# Some Successes



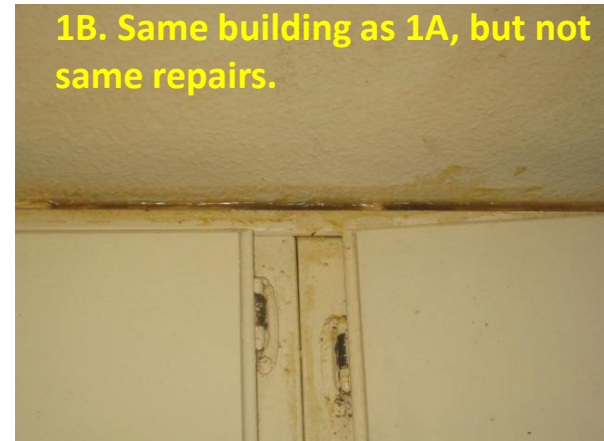
Owner paid for all the repairs and changes that were done.

# Some Success, with Challenges

**1A. Cleaned cabinets, sealed gaps and restored kitchens.**



**1B. Same building as 1A, but not same repairs.**



**New bathroom sinks for tenants were installed. But the building was so old that the walls are falling apart.**



# Analyzing the IPM Data



# The Results Show...

- IPM methods must be ongoing
- Decrease in roaches after consistent use of IPM – usually within 10-12 weeks
- Coordination and communication must exist between the tenants, building manager/owner, and pest control operator
- Green cleaning had to be done throughout the project in order to consistently decrease roach populations
  - Units that were inconsistent in their green cleaning had inconsistent roach reductions
- Close relation to roach populations and water leaks
  - Repairs were essential
- Monitoring by the owner has to take place every three months to control infestations
- The age and maintenance of the building is important to note before starting an IPM project. If the building looks to be in good condition but several “maintenance” issues come up, then it is better to assess the building as a “tenant rights” building, get the issues remedied and then start the IPM program.

# Challenges...

- Developing tailored messages to the owners
  - Focus on overall cost savings
- Ongoing tenant engagement and lack of resources
  - IPM requires time and adequate building maintenance
- Multiple infestations in one unit
  - IPM approaches are usually tailored for one type of infestation, having multiple pest infestations require a multi-IPM approach

# Policy Recommendations

- Healthy housing policy should integrate all home-based environmental threats – from quality of housing, lead exposures, allergens, and pest control
- Education to building managers/owners on the cost savings of using IPM approaches must be available
- Improve medical management and reporting of urban pesticide illness
- Create an IPM task force in the City of Los Angeles that will develop a plan to combat cockroaches, review health and housing codes, and incentivize IPM

# Key Message

- IPM works -- it saves money, improves health and by improving housing quality we can also gain other co-benefits
- Training is important -- Training maintenance staff is critical, training that focuses on contractors, day laborers, apartment management on how to perform IPM repairs is also very important
- Changing behavior -- Housing and health departments site for pest and vermin infestations with fumigation. Instead, they need to site to fix the underlying structural problems first. Bed bugs become resistant to many pesticides and present a unique challenge.
- IPM takes time, patience, maintenance.