



September 6, 2017

Greetings!

NMR staff were very excited to share their energy program evaluation knowledge at the 22nd IEPEC last month. We presented eight papers and six posters, covering topics ranging from upstream lighting programs to home energy scores. We were also happy to have one of our staff participate in a panel on the rapidly changing residential lighting market.

Couldn't make it to IEPEC? This newsletter features two of NMR's papers - [an evaluation of Massachusetts' Residential New Construction \(RNC\) program](#) and [an evaluation of Connecticut's Home Energy Solutions \(HES\) program](#). You can also find all of NMR's papers and posters [here](#).

Stay tuned for more IEPEC features in the fall!

How's that for Performance? Changes in New Construction Practices Over Time



An IEPEC paper by Zack Tyler, et al.

NMR conducted three studies, completed between 2011 and 2016, to assess statewide code compliance and to provide updated baseline inputs for Massachusetts' Residential New Construction (RNC) program savings calculations.

These studies covered the implementation of three separate energy code cycles.

Key Findings



Overall efficiency of RNC non-program homes, as measured by the HERS index, increased with each code change.



The efficiency of non-program homes significantly increased during the 2009 IECC. Increased efficiencies are due to a combination of NOMAD and RNC spillover.



Performance testing requirements for air and duct leakage led to large increases in non-program home efficiency.



The MA RNC program is pushing homes to achieve greater savings; a significant efficiency gap remains between program and non-program homes.



While program homes are more efficient than non-program homes, the gap is shrinking.

These findings provide lessons to inform RNC programs about the baseline changes to expect when undergoing a code change.

[Read Full Paper](#)



I'd Like to Fix Your Attic, But I'm Late for Another Appointment: Innovative Approaches to Uncovering the Real-World Practices of Weatherization Contractors

An IEPEC paper by Jared Powell, et al.

NMR evaluated Connecticut's flagship residential program, Home Energy Solutions, in which a team of approved contractors conducts home energy audits, makes core weatherization improvements, provides customers with recommendations for deeper retrofits, and describes low-interest financing options.

The evaluation used a mixed-methods research approach, which included in-depth interviews, a review of program records, in-home interviews with participating homeowners, and post-weatherization inspections by HERS raters.

Key Findings

- 1** The evaluation team identified concrete opportunities for increasing savings and revealed a misalignment between the savings goals of program staff and the weatherization contractors.
- 2** Customer perceptions of the program were consistently high, even in cases where evaluators saw work quality issues.
- 3** There were significant opportunities for more effective quality control and quality assurance inspections. For example, over half of the attics in the 70 visited homes were left without air sealing.
- 4** The programmatic pressures vendors face can affect the comprehensiveness of their weatherization services.

The evaluation team's findings provide lessons for other programs that seek to align their stated savings goals with the real-world practices of contractors.

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