

OH HELP!

The Ohio Help End Lead Poisoning Newsletter

Issue 7

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Help End Lead Poisoning General Membership Meeting

Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2003
Time: 10:30 - 12:00 (Board Meeting to follow)
Location: Columbus Health Department
Room #119D
240 Parsons Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(Northeast corner of Main St. and Parsons Ave.)

NEWS AROUND THE STATE

House Bill 248 - First draft of rules should be completed soon

After the governor signed House Bill 248 in January, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) began working on the rules for this bill.

The Bureau of Family and Child Health Services, headed by Karen Hughes, is currently working on rules regarding Investigation, while the Bureau of Quality Insurance is working on licensing requirements. Both departments are nearly finished with their first draft of the rules. The two departments met on May 1, 2003 and expect to meet every two to three weeks to begin collaborating their efforts. There are three attorneys who have also been involved in this process.

ODH expect to complete the first draft of the rules by the end of June. Once the first draft is completed, they plan to take comments from various interested parties. These parties may include, the HELP coalition, Local Health Departments, and the Apartment Owners Association. Once all problems and kinks have been worked out and other drafts are complete, they will take the rules to the public health council, which will have to approve the rules before going into affect. ODH hopes to finish the entire rule-making process and have everything in place by December 31, 2003.

For more information regarding the rules for House Bill 248, please contact Rick Bunner or Dan Chatfield at the Ohio Department of Health.

Pregnant Mother being screened for lead in Springfield and Youngstown

Pregnant women should also be especially careful when near a potential lead sources. A pregnant woman with high lead levels in her body can pass it to her baby. As a pregnant woman breathes in or swallows lead, it enters her bloodstream. From there, the lead can pass through

the placenta and into the baby's bones, brain, and other organs. A woman's past exposure to lead can also cause problems during pregnancy. Lead may be stored in the bones, where it will remain for years. During pregnancy, lead may be released with other minerals stored in the bones. Lead exposure may cause a premature birth, low birth weight baby, a miscarriage, or a stillbirth.

In January 2003, Clark and Mahoning Counties received a Primary Prevention grant to offer lead inspections as a preventive action in homes where pregnant women or small children live. The inspections can be done prior to the lead poisoning of a child, only with the landlord's permission. Clark Co. has increased the focus on pregnant woman. They have been doing blood testing on pregnant women, and an increase in education on the risks of lead exposure to the fetus, culminating at a seminar that will take place on May 30, 2003 in Springfield. Mahoning Co. is focusing more on fetal cord blood level results.



Help End Lead Poisoning

Lead Experts Speaking in Springfield

On Friday May 30, 2003, several lead experts will be speaking at a special one-day lead conference in Springfield, Ohio. Speakers include Dr. Maria Teresita Nanagas, Dr. Kim Dietrich, Terry Rigio, and Garnet Avery. Dr. Nanagas is a professor of pediatrics at Wright State University School of Medicine and the medical director of ambulatory pediatrics at The Children's Medical Center of Dayton.

After completing this seminar, all participants will be able to: (1) describe the past and current nature, extent, and sources of prenatal, postnatal, and childhood lead poisoning; (2) be familiar with the health effects at low levels of exposure; (3) discuss medical treatments available; and (4) become aware of current recommendations regarding medical and environmental management for pregnant women and children with elevated blood lead levels.

Dr. Dietrich is a professor of environmental health and pediatrics at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. He has spent many years doing pediatric research on a variety of environmental health topics.

Check out Help End Lead Poisoning Website!

<http://www.ohiocdc.org/HELP.html>

It includes all HELP publications, educational materials, information on House Bill 248, 100s of links, and much, much more.

Terry Rigio is an intervention specialist for the Springfield City Schools and has taught for 28 years. Garnet Avery is a parent of four lead poisoned children.

The speakers will present on topics ranging from the effects of lead on neurodevelopment to available medical treatments to a case presentation of a local lead poisoned child. Garnet Avery will give a presentation on a parent's perspective of lead and Terry Rigio will present a teacher's perspective.

Cleveland Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

The City of Cleveland has been very busy and successful recently in regards to lead poisoning prevention. Cleveland is finishing Round 8 of its HUD lead hazard control grant. Currently, they completely 208 units and expect to finish with 217 lead safe units. These numbers are far beyond their initial estimate of 196 units. They have been focusing most of their attention on window replacement, as that is where most of the lead contaminated dust accumulates. Renovations per unit have ranged from \$1,200 - 18,000, with the average cost per unit at \$5,800.

Cleveland recently received funding to implement the LEAP program, which focuses on enforcement. They targeted nearly 300 property owners and threatened legal action if they did not clean up environmental toxins in their units. 250 of these property owners have been prosecuted. Although it is unsure how the money will be used, the

city has made \$500,000 from these litigations.

Tom Neltner's Visit to Ohio

Tom Neltner, President of Improving Kids' Environment, came to speak to the HELP coalition on April 16, 2003. IKE is a non-profit childhood environmental health hazard prevention organization in Indiana. Mr. Neltner came to Ohio to discuss the current situation in Ohio and Indiana and how the states are able to help one another in eliminating lead.

In March of 2002, Indiana Governor signed two lead poisoning prevention legislations into law. Shortly thereafter, the Indiana Health Department sat down with all interested parties and tried to work through all the glitches and controversial details for the rules. Once all these problems were worked out, the department of health began to draft the rules. He suggested this tactic for Ohio. He expects the rules to be adopted much quicker because all the problems were already solved and all parties agree on the rules that are currently being drafted.

Mr. Neltner explained that Indiana has reciprocity for licensure with surrounding states and suggests that Ohio should adopt a similar policy. If someone is licensed in Ohio, they can be licensed in Indiana for a small fee. They are also required to take a two-hour course of the rules. If Ohio started a similar policy, it would help cities and towns that border other states, specifically Southeastern and Northwestern Ohio.

Indiana took a different approach than Ohio regarding liability. House Bill 248, states that if preventive treatments are performed then it assumed to not be the source of the lead poisoning. Indiana's new law states that all paint in pre-1950 housing is lead paint.

Indiana has been using LEAP, the Lead Elimination Action Plan to get results with enforcement. They have used private money to talk with landlords about new disclosure laws. Many large landlords are not disclosing work to tenants, so IKE has been threatening legal action if the problems are not fixed. Mr. Neltner has found tremendous success with this tactic because it gives IKE leverage. He suggests that local and state agencies take on this program. In Marion County, lead poisoning rates have been dropping significantly annually.

Another successful project IKE has been working on is SEARCH, an AECLP project. This project works with community centers and clergy to eliminate other environmental toxins, such as roaches. This project sends youth into high-risk areas to look for roaches and other health hazards. If the problems are only found in one unit, it is the tenants' problems, but more than that it becomes the landlords problem and he or she is required to fix it. Mr. Neltner said, "it is important not to just talk lead, you need to include Asthma, roaches, and molds. This will get more public attention."

For more information about Lead Poisoning Prevention in Indiana you may contact Tom Neltner at 317-442-3973 or visit his website at <http://www.ikecoalition.org/>

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**NEWS AROUND
THE NATION**

**"Safe" Levels of lead
exposure are harmful to
children**

*By Thomas H. Maugh II
LA Times Staff Writer*

Lead levels now widely believed to be safe in children actually produce a severe impact on intellectual development, researchers report today.

Blood levels of lead below current federal and international guidelines of 10 micrograms per deciliter produce a surprisingly large drop in IQ of up to 7.4 points, a U.S. team reports in today's New England Journal of Medicine. Researchers estimate that one in every 50 U.S. children has lead levels above that guideline and that one in every 10 has levels of 5 micrograms/deciliter or above - well within the dangerous range.

"People have been asking, 'How low [a lead concentration] is low

enough?" said Dr. Richard Canfield of Cornell University, one of the leaders of the study. "The fact is, in our study, we found no evidence for a safe level. There is no safe level of exposure."

The findings "reflect the growing opinion that low levels of lead are more toxic than we thought," said Dr. Herbert A. Needleman, a prominent lead researcher who was not involved in this study. "When we took the lead out of gasoline that left one remaining big source, old houses. Now we have to take the lead out of old houses."

An estimated 38 million houses built before 1950 still have lead-based paints on their walls. "There is a message for parents in here that goes beyond whatever government policy recommendations should be," Canfield said. Just as parents should protect their children from the effects of smoking and alcohol use, they "should be aware of sources of lead in their environment and, most important, should try to engage in some type of cleanup or abatement so the child never comes in contact with lead."

In a separate paper in the journal, researchers from the Environmental Protection Agency also found that low levels of lead delay puberty for several months in young girls, especially African Americans and Latinas.

Although delaying puberty is not necessarily harmful, the findings suggest that lead is interfering with critical hormonal processes during development.

"That fits in with the increased interest in general with the idea that environmental chemicals can be endocrine disruptors," said Dr.

David Bellinger of Harvard Medical School. "Lead has not been considered as prominently as other chemicals. This suggests that we ought to be looking at it more closely."

Today, the average is about 3. "But that's still 10 to 100 times higher than the level in pre-industrial humans," said Dr. Bruce Lanphear of the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, another study leader. "Three mcg/dl is low by current standards, but from an evolutionary perspective, it is quite high."

Canfield and Lanphear's team studied 172 children in the Rochester, N.Y., area, measuring blood lead levels at ages 6, 12, 18, 24, 36, 48 and 60 months. The children were tested for IQ at 3 and 5 years of age.

They found that a rise in lead levels from 1 mcg/dl to 10 was associated with a 7.4-point drop in IQ. An increase in lead levels from 10 to 30 mcg/dl was associated with an additional drop of only about two to three points, in line with previous studies.

"This really changes the way we think about childhood lead exposure," Lanphear said. "We have to start thinking about how we might identify hazards and reduce them before children are exposed." A 1991 study showed that lead abatement in old houses would cost about \$32 billion, but would bring benefits in such areas as special education of more than \$60 billion.

In the second study, EPA researchers found that a blood level of 3 mcg/dl was associated with a delay in the onset of

puberty of four to six months in African American and Latina girls.

Senator Schumer urges for a new lead poisoning definition

U.S. Senator Charles Schumer is calling on the federal government to change the legal threshold of what constitutes lead poisoning in children.

This was precipitated by a study of 172 Rochester children, published last week in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, concluded that children suffer intellectual impairment at blood-lead levels below 10 micrograms per deciliter -- currently considered acceptable by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"More children than ever before are at risk of serious defects like brain damage," Schumer said Tuesday at the University of Rochester Medical Center, which worked on the study. "We need to lower the acceptable level of lead in children's blood to reflect reality."

Appropriate

Schumer said he has written the CDC, asking officials to adjust the definition of lead poisoning. He also pledged to help the Monroe County Health Department seek federal grants to help clean housing units contaminated by lead-based paint.



Help End Lead Poisoning

R.I. Attorney General calling for speedy retrial

BY PETER B. LORD
Journal Environment Writer

Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch said yesterday that he plans to ask Superior Court Judge Michael A. Silverstein to schedule time as soon as possible for another trial of the nation's paint companies to recover damages caused by the lead-based paints they made two generations ago.

The state attracted national attention last fall during a seven-week trial when it sought to prove the companies created a public nuisance by making paints that have poisoned thousands of children. The case ended in a mistrial last October.

Afterward, both sides wrote briefs calling for directed verdicts. Silverstein rejected them all. Nothing more was said by either side, forcing financial analysts around the country to speculate about what would happen next.

Last week, Judge Silverstein tried to bring the dozens of lawyers involved in the case together for a meeting that he proposed for Monday of this week. Some out-of-town lawyers objected that the meeting would force them to travel during the Easter holiday, so Silverstein agreed to a postponement until as early as next week.

Lynch said that his staff has been preparing to retry the case since he took office in early January and he's ready to go to trial as soon as possible. Lawyers for the paint companies declined to comment, other than to say they want to learn what the state's intentions are first.

"I was always hopeful that given the opportunity, we'd be able to try this by summer," Lynch said. "I remain hopeful for that. Those are the very things we need to discuss."

The state has shown that more than 35,000 Rhode Island children have been poisoned in the last 10 years by ingesting microscopic amounts of lead left behind by paints used years ago. When Whitehouse launched his suit, he argued that the children, their parents, and the community were all paying to clean up the lead paint -- everyone but the very companies that made it.

The companies insist they didn't know lead paints were harmful when they made them, and they took them off the market when the dangers became known. Lynch dismissed Linn Freedman, the lead lawyer in the case for the attorney general's department, when he took office. He said Assistant Attorney General Neil Kelly, who helped in the trial last fall, would now be the lead lawyer and he would not say whether he will change any of the state's legal strategies.

For more information about the law suit, visit the HELP website at www.ohiocdc.org/HELP.html

Editor's Notes

If you have any news or information that you would like to see in this newsletter or questions/comments about the newsletter please contact Ira Horowitz at 614-461-6392 or via email at no_lead2002@yahoo.com