



BEYOND FLINT

The crisis of lead in older housing

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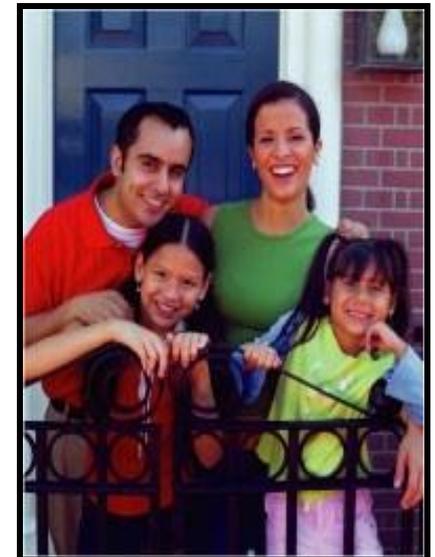
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Isles' Mission

To foster self-reliant families...



Isles' Mission

and healthy, sustainable communities.



Isles' Experience with Community Health

- Tested more than 2,000 homes for hazardous lead. More than 60% had enough lead present to affect a child's IQ.
- Created the nationally-recognized ReHEET service that combines lead safety, energy efficiency and healthy homes retrofits.
- Established the NJ Healthy Homes Training Center to train community health workers, social workers, building inspectors, etc.
- Trained teams of peer educators to visit homes and identify environmental asthma triggers and conduct sampling for lead.
- Compiled data for an environmental health profile of Trenton with comparisons to county and state data.

Poll:

In 2015, how many children in New Jersey had elevated blood lead levels (>5mg/dl) for the first time?

ANSWER

B: 3,000 children in NJ had elevated blood lead levels for the first time in 2015. Between 2000-2014, more than 220,000 New Jersey children were poisoned by lead exposure.

“If any other consumer product, such as a toy or home appliance, caused one-tenth the damage, the entire country would be outraged. This is just New Jersey, and it's entirely, completely avoidable.

-- Ted Lidsky of Manalapan, a neuropsychologist and neuroscientist.

What's Flint have to do with NJ?

- Because of Flint MI, most of us now know lead in water can poison children.
- Flint re-opened our hearts and minds about the very old problem of lead poisoning in NJ and the nation.
- Compared data for NJ to Flint: 11 cities in NJ had a higher % of children testing high for lead in 2014 than Flint had during 2015.



No Competition Here

- Not to take any attention or resources away from Flint, but simply highlight the thousands of children who have high levels of lead for the first time in NJ---every year.
- Let's have the same attention for our NJ children as is being given to Flint children.
- High lead levels do not necessarily translate to certain education failure, but areas with high concentration of children with EBLs need more early childhood resources.



Lead Paint in Old Housing

- **FACT:** Lead paint is by far the most common source of lead exposure for the US.
- Experts tell us that up to 80% of lead exposure is from lead paint. Up to 20% from drinking water.
- Exposure can also come from soil but soil is usually the medium for lead paint, i.e., in the lot left behind after housing demolition, front and backyards, old factory sites, a part of our industrial legacy



It's Not New: Lead Problem in NJ

- In 2015, more than 3,000 children in New Jersey had a lead level of 5 or greater for the first time
- About 225,000 young kids in New Jersey have been poisoned by lead since 2000.
- Lead-poisoned children are seven times more likely to drop out of school and six times more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system.



Lead exposure is cumulative

- It typically comes from these main sources:



Didn't we solve this problem in the 1970's?

- In the 1970's, we removed lead from gasoline and new paint.
- National rates of high lead levels have been significantly reduced since then
- Hides the harsh fact that low-income minority children continue to be disproportionately exposed to lead, and are 2-4 X more likely to have a high lead level compared to most suburban children.



Dangers of Lead Exposure

- In 2016, lead poisoning remains the **#1 environmental threat** to the health of America's children, as well as a health risk for people of all ages.
- Exposure to lead negatively affects academic performance, increases all types of learning disabilities, impairs ability to regulate behavior and mood, and is associated with attention deficit disorder, aggression, and higher rates of criminal behavior.
- Lead is so toxic that it is unsafe at any level.

Lead Poisoning and School Performance

- Compromised long-term memory---for example, a student can't recall multiplication tables from one day to next
- Reduced auditory processing makes it difficult, for example, to hear the difference between “s” and “f” impeding the ability to read
- Inability to control behavior
- Inability to learn no matter how hard a child tries
- Disruption in classrooms by children frustrated by their failure to learn make it difficult for *other* children to learn.
- Lower test scores for individuals and entire school districts that have a disproportionate number of children with lead poisoning
- Disproportionate number of low-income males incarcerated, unemployed and aimless

Cost of Lead Hazards Continues to be Immense

- What is strangely misunderstood is the costs of lead poisoning are primarily borne outside the health sector in:
 1. Social and economic costs of special education,
 2. Classroom disruption by children failing to learn
 3. Disproportionate incarceration of young minority men
 4. Family stress
 5. Life-long disability payments
 6. Forfeited tax revenues for adults who cannot work
 7. Adult health problems

ROI of Lead Remediation

- The cost to remediate lead hazards in housing averages between \$5,000-\$12,000 per unit. The cost not to remediate is \$32,000 per child/ per year.
- Researchers claim that anywhere ***between \$17 and \$221 could be saved in taxes for each dollar spent*** on lead safe repairs.
- The NJ Department of the Public Advocate estimates future savings from avoiding lead exposures to be \$27 billion statewide.

Existing Lead Poisoning Policies (partial)

- Universal screening of NJ Children
- Additional support for lead screenings for children affected by Superstorm Sandy
- Home repair funds---largely unspent---for households affected by Sandy
- Visual inspections every 5 years for rental units in buildings with 3 or more units. Landlord responsible for correcting unsafe lead conditions.
- NJ Healthy Homes Training Center, supported by NJ DOH, trains community health workers, professionals and consumers in the principles of healthy homes

EDUCATION AND TRAINING ARE NOT ENOUGH

Prevention, Prevention, Prevention

- Over the last decades, **treatment**, has been the guiding paradigm for lead poisoning policy
- Use children as lead detectors, and then go into the house to see if you can remove hazardous conditions
- If lead levels are 40 ug/dL or higher, there can be medical intervention for child, but otherwise no treatment available.
- Beacon to guide future policies must be to **prevent** lead poisoning in the first place.

What Can Be Done?

- More accessible data---map it!
- Public policy—local, state and federal
- Housing rehabilitation
- Consumer education
- Professional education
- Involve educators (for another webinar)

Local Public Policy

1. Enforce housing codes
2. Housing inspections on demand
3. Landlords to obtain lead safe certificates before renting units
4. Inspections at time of rental turnover and at time of sale
5. Require housing inspectors to train in the seven principles of healthy homes
6. Create local healthy homes advisory groups

State Policies

1. Test housing: Lead safe certificates before units can be rented state wide- including Section 8 and public housing; at time of sale
2. Lead disclosure at time of sale
3. Support partnerships between CHWs and housing inspection services
4. Testing drinking water—everywhere!
5. Test playgrounds
6. Change the NJ action level for lead poisoning from $>10\text{mg/dl}$ to $>5\text{mg/dl}$.

Federal Policies

- Restore HUD funding back to \$230M /yr from current \$110M
- Full Disclosure about lead in home at time of sale. No more “I Don’t Know.”
- Bring HUD regulations to be consistent with CDC reference level of => 5ug/dL

Housing Rehab and Repair

- Restore \$10M LHCAF
- Fund comprehensive lead and healthy homes repair projects, like ReHEET.
- Train other community organizations to provide comprehensive services.
- Make funds available to residents to make lead safe repairs.



Consumer Education to Help Residents

- Provide education about lead and healthy homes issues in all health care and community settings where young children and families are present.
- Provide widespread lead testing of homes and children. Test homes before children are poisoned



Professional Education of Home Visitors

- Train social workers and other home visitors as Community Health Workers.
- Train Energy Auditors as “Healthy Home Evaluators”
- Train all Building Inspectors in “Code Inspection for Healthier Home” course.
- Make the EPA Lead RRP course mandatory for contractors to get or renew business license.



Services Offered by Isles

Professional training for home visitors

- Healthy Homes for Community Health Workers
- Essentials for Healthy Homes Practitioners
- Code Inspections for a Healthier Home
- EPA Renovation, Repair and Painting
- Healthy Homes Evaluator (NEW!)

Community presentations on lead and healthy homes

- 7 Keys to a Healthy Home
- Eco-Healthy Child Care

Technical assistance to community organizations and governments

- Comprehensive lead, energy and healthy homes programs

Contact Us

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