

Contact: T.J. Bucholz (517) 241-2112

Agency: Community Health

Final Report to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning Presented to Governor Granholm

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State officials today unveiled a new policy direction for the prevention and eventual elimination of childhood lead poisoning throughout Michigan at Children's Hospital in Detroit, one of the state's premier facilities for lead treatment.

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm commissioned the Report of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Task Force last year to eliminate childhood lead poisoning last year. The Governor praised the Task Force's work.

"Over the last year, hundreds of individuals worked tirelessly to find new ways to prevent and eliminate lead poisoning in our children, and I am extremely proud of their effort," Granholm said. "This report represents a huge leap forward in protecting our children from the effects of lead poisoning."

[Open the Report document](#)

The main goal of the task force's comprehensive report is to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in Michigan by 2010.

For Fiscal Year 2005, Granholm, through the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), has committed more than \$1 million to address lead prevention in the state.

"Childhood lead poisoning represents a significant health threat to thousands of children across the state, and these new recommendations represent our best efforts to move Michigan forward and reduce lead poisoning statewide," said Janet Olszewski, MDCH Director. "Legislators, in a bi-partisan manner, continue to work together to pass laws implementing these recommendations."

The 170-member Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Task Force presented several concrete recommendations for future policy direction, including:

- Michigan should establish a public health trust to serve as a repository for a variety of potential revenues in order to provide a stable ongoing funding stream for the prevention of lead poisoning in children as well as lead control and remediation activities.
- Michigan should develop and maintain a mandatory lead status housing registry for pre-1978 rental properties with a voluntary component for post-1978 rental properties.
- Michigan should develop and implement a major public awareness campaign to assure that parents understand the dangers of lead exposure and are encouraged to seek lead testing of their children at appropriate intervals.
- Michigan should identify or establish a commission to evaluate and coordinate lead resources and activities statewide.
- Michigan should create the capacity to assist communities in building effective coalitions and obtaining grant/foundation funding to address lead poisoning.
- Michigan should assure the provision of case management for children with elevated blood lead levels.
- Michigan should expand the remediation and control of lead hazards in residential environments.

"We believe lead poisoning may already affect as many as 20,000 children," said Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom,

Michigan's Surgeon General. "Every year we wait to address these critical issues is another year that thousands more children in Michigan are placed at-risk needlessly."

Two major pieces of legislation, Public Act 55, which requires Medicaid providers to test 80 percent of all children enrolled in the program by 2006, and Public Act 54, which mandates state electronic reporting of blood lead tests were signed into law by Governor Granholm earlier this year.

Other legislation, which creates penalties for rental property owners who knowingly rent dwellings with lead hazards, a "lead-safe" housing registry, and an establishment of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Commission, is in the final stages of House and Senate approval.

"It is clear that Governor Granholm has made the elimination of lead poisoning in children no less than a moral imperative," said Steve Chester, Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. "Following the task force's seven major recommendations as a roadmap will be extremely important in our joint effort."

In 2003, more than 3,100 children tested for blood lead status were found to be unacceptable levels of lead in their bloodstreams. Lead-based paint was in common use for homes built prior to 1950. Between 1950 and 1978, the percentage of lead in paint used in housing gradually decreased, but it was not until 1978 that lead-based paint was banned.

"Our Children's Hospital of Michigan has been a leader in the public education and elimination efforts of lead poisoning in Michigan's kids. The Governor's effort to help eliminate this problem for our state's children is critically important," said Mike Duggan, president and CEO of the Detroit Medical Center.

Although lead paint was banned for residential use, lead remained a gasoline additive until the late 1980s and can still be found in soil and dust from gasoline exhaust.

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