

Community Advisory Group (CAG)

for the

Omaha Lead Site

Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee
Summary Notes from February 15, 2005 Meeting
Douglas/Sarpy County Extension Office

Janet Bonet (Citizen at Large), Brenda Council (CAG Facilitator), Todd Davis (NDEQ), Jonah Deppe (League of Women Voters), Todd Falter (Nebraska Health and Human Services), Bob Feild (EPA), Mary Hill (Sisters Together), Stacy Meacham (MFG, Inc.), Jennifer Rawley (MFG, Inc.), Reid Steinkraus (Douglas County Health Department), Che Thomson (Lead Safe Omaha Coalition), Marian Todd (City of Omaha), and Vernon Waldren (Douglas/Sarpy Extension) were in attendance.

Ms. Deppe opened the meeting by noting that the Education Subcommittee has developed a work plan for the education component of the CAG's Comprehensive plan. Ms. Deppe stated that the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee needed to identify other components where developing a work plan would assist in meeting the goals of the CAG's Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee members has been asked to review the CAG's Comprehensive Plan and the State's Plan to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning prior to the meeting.

Ms. Council stated that the CAG could pursue grants and funding for a 501(3)(c) organization during EPA's 120-day moratorium.

The Subcommittee discussed elements of the Comprehensive Plan and identified elements that could be addressed by the Subcommittee, including:

- Screening;
- Case management;
- Surveillance of children with elevated blood lead levels;
- Identification of sources of lead; and
- Collaboration of service providers.

Mr. Waldren noted that the Education Subcommittee is addressing training, education, outreach, and awareness. It was also noted that the Douglas County Health Department is responsible for case management and surveillance.

Mr. Feild asked if it would be possible to coordinate screening efforts in advance. Subcommittee members stated that because screening occurs at different events throughout the year, such coordination would be difficult. Although it would be difficult to keep track of screening events in advance, the Douglas County Health Department does receive reports of all screens.

The Subcommittee discussed the need to increase screening in the community. Mr. Falter stated that limited funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is available for

individuals who would otherwise “fall through the cracks.” Ms. Thomson suggested incorporating lead screening and education into the State daycare-licensing program. Ms. Council indicated that modifying the daycare-licensing program would require a change in State law, and thus, should be addressed under the advocacy component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Subcommittee members also discussed education needed to convince medical practitioners to screen children. Mr. Falter stated that Medicaid phone nurses are being contracted to contact doctors to encourage screening. Ms. Bonet suggested nurses conducting follow-up phone calls to patients also encourage lead screening. Ms. Thomson suggested that reminder cards be sent to families with children under the age of seven, to remind families when it is time for a follow-up test. Mr. Steinkraus reported that the Douglas County Health Department currently sends reminder letter to families; however, many of the letters are returned because the families have moved.

In regards to the identification of lead sources, Mr. Steinkraus stated that the Douglas County Health Department will perform environmental investigations at homes with children with blood lead levels greater than or equal to 10 µg/dL, after an increase in personnel is obtained. Presently, the Douglas County Health Department performs environmental investigations at homes with children with blood lead levels greater than or equal to 15µg/dL.

It was discussed that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is recommending random environmental testing of homes. The Douglas County Health Department does not have the capability. Ms. Council suggested that this could be an area the CAG could assist with identification of resources.

Ms. Deppe asked Mr. Feild to explain how EPA would be addressing exterior lead-based paint. Mr. Feild stated that EPA is committed to testing homes, including sampling paint, dust, and water.

Ms. Bonet suggested that low-interest loans be made available to individuals for housing remediation. Ms. Todd stated that the City is establishing a new rehabilitation program that will provide subsidized loans; however, the funding is very limited.

Mr. Steinkraus announced that the Douglas County Health Department is drafting a lead paint ordinance to require paint stabilization to control lead hazards. The Douglas County Health Department is looking for a City Council member to sponsor the ordinance and support from the CAG.

The Subcommittee agreed that HUD and the Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) need to be involved with the CAG and the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee. Ms. Council stated that she would contact HUD and OHA.

The next Subcommittee meeting will be held on March 15, 2005 at 11:00 a.m. at the Family Resource Center, located at 3040 Lake Street.