

# Educating Parents and Clinical Providers



Approximately half a million U.S. children under 6 years of age have blood lead levels at or above 5 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ). No safe blood lead level in children has been identified. High blood lead levels not only damage physical health but also reduce IQ, increase rates of juvenile delinquency, and contribute to decreased lifetime earnings. To prevent childhood lead poisoning, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** funded 29 states, 5 cities, and the District of Columbia to

- build and strengthen lead surveillance systems, allowing for the identification of neighborhoods and populations of children disproportionately affected by high blood lead levels,
- educate parents and clinical providers in target areas with messages about the importance of blood lead testing for children under 6 years of age, and
- collaborate with institutional and community-based partners to initiate, promote, and evaluate childhood lead poisoning prevention activities.

Each funded jurisdiction works to eliminate childhood lead poisoning by creatively targeting resources and implementing effective program initiatives.

## MISSISSIPPI

Awarded  
**\$163,102**  
by CDC in fiscal  
year 2014

Nearly **20%** of  
children classified as  
high-risk tested  
annually (n = 20,000)

Program  
transitioning to the  
CDC-supported lead  
surveillance system  
(HHLSS)

Program collaborates with  
cities to educate children  
and parents on the dangers  
of lead poisoning

## SUCCESS

The Mississippi Lead Poisoning Prevention and Healthy Homes Program used CDC cooperative agreement funds to partner with six communities identified as high-risk areas for lead poisoning: the City of Meridian, the City of Jackson, the City of Hattiesburg, the City of West Point, the City of Moss Point, and the City of Yazoo City.

Between July 1 and December 31, 2015, city partners facilitated lead poisoning prevention and health homes trainings, planned and conducted healthy homes community planning meetings featuring focused discussion on childhood lead poisoning prevention, and distributed health education materials to residents.

Through focused campaigns, the communities distributed 2,000 lead poisoning prevention educational materials featuring details about lead testing and identifying lead sources. The communities also distributed 900 lead poisoning prevention toolkits to resident families. Since 2010,\* Mississippi has experienced an 18% increase in children tested for lead.

Equipped with information about lead poisoning, the cities are reviewing, planning, and implementing methods for updating environmental health ordinances.

\*According to the recently published "2010-2014 Mississippi Lead Poisoning Prevention and Healthy Homes Program Surveillance Snapshot," Mississippi increased the number of children tested by 18% between 2010 and 2014 through health promotion activities.

*Photo obtained from the CDC Public Health Image Library (<http://phil.cdc.gov/phil/home.asp>). Photo Credit: Amanda Mills.*

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