

CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- Childhood lead poisoning remains a major preventable environmental public health problem in the United States. According to recent data, an estimated 434,000 U.S. children 1 to 5 years of age have blood lead levels greater than 10 micrograms per deciliter, a level at which harmful health effects are known to occur.
- Lead poisoning can affect nearly every system in the body and cause learning disabilities and behavioral problems. At very high levels, lead poisoning can cause seizures, coma, and death. Lead poisoning often occurs with no obvious symptoms and frequently goes unrecognized.
- Children from all social and economic levels can be affected by lead poisoning. However, children living near the poverty level and in old, poorly maintained housing are disproportionately affected as are children from some racial and ethnic groups.
- The economic benefit of preventing lead exposure among children reaching 2 years of age was estimated to be on average \$213 billion in 2000.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

In 1990, CDC established the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program which provides leadership to state and local health departments in developing comprehensive childhood lead poisoning prevention programs. Additionally CDC has

- Funded nearly 60 childhood lead poisoning prevention programs to develop, implement, and evaluate lead poisoning prevention activities.
- Provided technical assistance to support the development of state and local lead screening plans.
- Fostered agreements between state and local health departments and state Medicaid agencies to link surveillance and Medicaid data.
- Provided training to public health professionals through CDC's National Lead Training Resource Center.
- Supported the formation of collaborative relationships between CDC's funded partners and other lead poisoning prevention organizations and agencies (e.g., community-based, nonprofit, and housing groups).
- Developed the Childhood Blood Lead Surveillance System through which 46 states report data to CDC.
- Expanded public health laboratory capacity in states to analyze blood and environmental samples and to ensure quality, timely, and accurate analysis of results.

In 2003, CDC awarded \$31.7 million to 42 state and local health departments to continue their comprehensive childhood lead poisoning prevention efforts to achieve the *Healthy People 2010* goal of eliminating childhood lead poisoning as a public health problem.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC is committed to the *Healthy People 2010* goal. CDC continues to assist state and local childhood lead poisoning prevention programs, provide a scientific basis for policy decisions, and ensure that health issues are addressed in decisions about housing and the environment.

For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/program

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