

# Lead Hazard Identification in Units Rented to Public Assistance Clients, Monroe County, NY

**Presentation to Advisory Committee on  
Childhood Lead Poisoning, Oct. 25, 2005**

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# Presentation Objectives

- Define characteristics of efficient local primary prevention **interventions**
- Define issues for efficient **targeting** of housing for lead hazard assessment
- Define Monroe County, NY, Quality Housing Initiative (**QHI**)

# Characteristics of Efficient Lead Primary Prevention Interventions

- **Housing focus**
- Utilizes an **efficient targeting** approach
- **Integrated** into local public health, social services and housing programs
- Utilizes a substantial **funding** source
- **Acceptable** to property owners

# Childhood Lead Poisoning Rochester (Monroe County), NY

- Rust belt city in upstate NY
- 80,000 residential properties
- 80% (64,000) built before 1970
- High rates of deteriorated housing in crescent-shaped core of city
- 2004: 900 children with BLL >10ug/dl
- 95% of these children thought to be on Public Assistance

# Public Assistance, 2005

## Rochester (Monroe County), NY

- Number of Families Receiving Public Assistance 13,510
- Number of Children under age 18 in Families Receiving Public Assistance 11,953
- Assuming 2 children per household, 6,000 units house children on Public Assistance at any point in time
- Program Administered by Monroe County Department of Human Services (MC-DHS)
- Housing Quality (Code Enforcement) managed by City of Rochester

# What is the most efficient way to “target” housing for lead hazard assessment?

- All residential housing units
- All rental units
- All units with children under age 6
- All housing in “crescent”
- All housing rented to families on PA
- All housing rented to families on PA with children under 6
- All housing in “crescent” rented to families on PA with children under 6

# Consequences of “targeting” too broadly

- **“False Positive”**
- **Expense** to municipality or landlord
- Delays in renting property (excessive **vacancies**)
- Reduction in available low income housing (**“homelessness”**)

# Consequences of “targeting” too narrowly

- “False Negative”
- **Excessive hazards** to children
- Inappropriate “**sense of security**” for community

# Data Used for Developing Targeting Strategy, Rochester, NY

- 64,000 units built before 1970
- 25,000 units in the “crescent”
- 6,000 units occupied by families on Public Assistance
- 900 Children with BLL over 10ug/dl
- Monroe County Dept. of Public Health Pilot: 100% of properties in QHI in 2005 had lead hazards

# PA Housing Problems for MC-DHS

- **Lack of affordable low income housing**
- **Poor quality of housing**
- **Lead hazards**
- **Property damage by PA clients**
- **Disagreements about responsibility for property damage**
- **PA clients often fail to pay rent**

# Monroe County QHI (Quality Housing Initiative)

- **Initiated 1995**
- **“Move In/Move Out” Inspections** for PA rental properties when property is **vacant**
- **Inspection performed by City of Rochester Code Enforcement Officers** based on housing code
- **MC-DPH contracts with City** for QHI inspections
- **Voluntary** for Landlord
- **Reward for Landlord:** if property passes QHI inspection, landlord eligible for direct payment of rent from MC-DHS

# Stakeholders View QHI favorably

- Landlords like the **direct rent payment**
- Landlords feels that QHI helps **prevent damage to their properties**
- MC-DHS believes QHI **protects clients**
- MC-DHS has **fewer hassles** with landlords
- City of Rochester gets **resources from “wealthy” county government** for a housing program

# One Big Problem with QHI: No Lead Hazard Assessments

- **Lead hazards not currently defined** in Rochester City Housing Code
- Rochester City Housing **Code to be amended** fall 2005 to make “peeling paint” presumptively a health and safety code violation

# 2006: QHI will become a lead hazard primary prevention intervention

- Lead hazards will be identified in residential units rented by PA clients
- Inspections performed by City Code Enforcement Officers
- Inspections paid for by MC-DHS
- Source of funds Public Assistance (TANF)

# QHI as a Primary Prevention Intervention

- Efficient targeting based on PA
- Paid for with PA funds
- Integrated with MC-DPH PA program
- Integrated with City Code Enforcement Program
- Currently viewed positively by landlords