



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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John R. Kasich/Governor

Richard Hodges/Director of Health

APR 13 2016

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Dear Congressman Pallone,

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) lead activities provide for public and professional education, public health lead investigations, case management, data collection, and analysis. ODH also licenses lead risk assessors, lead abatement contractors, lead abatement workers, lead inspectors, and lead abatement project designers to provide for safe and proper lead abatement and detection.

Representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) visited ODH last week and commended Ohio's leadership on childhood lead poisoning prevention and shared that our program reflects the gold standard across the nation. ODH's efforts to protect children from lead poisoning are further detailed below.

Ohio law provides for children at risk for lead poisoning to receive blood lead tests. Children in Ohio are to be tested if they meet the following criteria: 1) they reside in a high risk zip code; 2) are eligible for Medicaid, or 3) the child's guardian has responded in the affirmative or unknown to a paper screening questionnaire regarding lead exposure. This three-pronged approach to targeted blood lead screening is designed to provide for children who are at risk for lead poisoning to receive a blood lead test to determine their blood lead level and receive treatment in the event of a confirmed elevated blood lead level.

Ohio tests children enrolled in Medicaid, per guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). In accordance with ODH requirements and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC), children eligible for Medicaid should receive a blood lead test at 12 months, 24 months, and additionally before age six if a child has no documented testing history. Blood tests must be submitted to ODH by certified laboratories when children with elevated blood levels are identified. ODH combines electronically reported blood lead levels with Medicaid claims data to determine children with an elevated level. Annually, ODH publishes testing data on its [website](#), and reports quarterly lead test results received to the CDC regardless of the blood lead level.

Once a child with an elevated blood lead level is identified, an investigation is conducted to determine the cause. In Ohio, deteriorating lead-based paint is the most likely cause of the elevated blood lead levels in children. Funding dedicated for lead based paint hazard control and lead reduction through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is approximately \$10 million in Federal Fiscal Year 16 (FFY16). Approximately 90% of the funds are provided directly to nine large, urban jurisdictions in Ohio based on population and other factors identified by HUD, and the remaining 10% goes to ODH. (ODH received a

quarterly performance rating of 100/100 in February from HUD, indicating that benchmarks for lead hazard control activities are being met under the grant.)

The portion of those funds received by the state of Ohio is dispersed in the approximate amount of \$1.1 million dollars in grant funds and an additional \$70,000 in matching funds from the Ohio Development Services Agency's Housing Trust Fund. Funds will be dispersed to 18 Ohio counties chosen based on identified gaps in service and the need, as demonstrated by the number of children diagnosed with lead poisoning annually.

Medicaid covers the cost of testing children on Medicaid and private insurers are billed for non-Medicaid children. Medicaid also provides reimbursement to the state for lead investigations for Medicaid-covered children. The Maternal and Child Health Block Grant provides an additional \$1.2 million per year to support investigations and personnel in the Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

ODH also receives CDC funding through the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Amounts received over the past three fiscal years are as follows:

- 10/1/13-9/29/14 \$0
- 9/30/14-9/29/15 \$406,472
- 9/30/15-9/29/16 \$376,451

Prevention funds were used to develop a surveillance system to manage and disseminate lead poisoning data. The system allows ODH to identify lead poisoned children and populations most in need so that efforts can be focused on that population. The system is used to target education activities in communities to make child lead poisoning a priority for medical providers and health and housing agencies, to document the efficacy of medical case management, and to monitor environmental investigation activity.

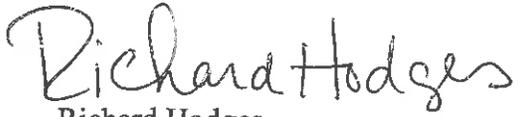
In 2014, the definition of an elevated blood lead level in the state of Ohio was changed to be consistent with the CDC reference level. And, the definition of lead poisoning in OAC 3701-30-01 is consistent with the CDC. The attached Lead Case Management Protocol and Public Health Lead Investigation Manual outline interventions and blood lead levels that trigger these interventions. Recently, the surveillance system underwent a period of dedicated code development. This improved the state's ability to receive electronically reported files, add local health department users, generate electronic referrals for appropriate follow-up services, and utilize reports to track progress on services provided.

Testing results are imported into the system and are available for review by any case manager or investigator in the system with access to that jurisdiction. If the system determines that blood lead levels are increasing on an open case, a system alert is sent to the assigned case manager. The frequency for receiving a re-test is dependent on the child's blood lead level. ODH outlines the recommended re-testing schedule in its *Medical Management Recommendations for Ohio Children Receiving Blood Lead Tests*.

As requested, I am attaching grant applications, reports, budget narratives, and other documents submitted to the CDC for the Lead Poisoning and Prevention Program. ODH is committed to protecting children at risk for lead poisoning through targeted prevention and control strategies identified above.

Thank you for your interest in this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Hodges". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard Hodges
Director of Health

cc: Ranking Member Green, Subcommittee on Health
Ranking Member DeGette, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Ranking Member Tonko, Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy