

Improving Lead Screening for Young Children: *What Communities Need to Know*

LEAD MAY BE A THREAT TO YOUR COMMUNITY.

☛ Old, run-down homes are the main source of lead poisoning in children. (Some communities may have other sources.)

☛ **Target** communities are where children are most likely to have a lead problem.

CHILDREN IN TARGET COMMUNITIES SHOULD HAVE LEAD SCREENING.

☛ **Lead screening** is done using a blood test.

☛ The best time to screen is at age one and again at age two.

☛ The test can show whether children are exposed to harmful lead. If so, they should receive follow-up care.

☛ Children in the Medicaid program are entitled to lead screening at ages one and two.

FIND OUT ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

☛ You can find information about lead hazards in your community on the Internet.

- Use www.scorecard.org/env-releases/lead. (Also gives basic how-to on getting information)
- Also, see your community's census data that is associated with lead poisoning at the CDC website, www2.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/census90/house11/house11.htm.

☛ Your local health department keeps track of information on cases of lead poisoning in your area. It also has information on lead in your community.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

☛ Where are children most likely to be exposed to lead? (This could be blocks, or whole neighborhoods.)

☛ How many children in these areas get screening at age one and age two?

☛ How many children in Medicaid get screening?

✱ Who does screening? For example, managed care? The health department?

✱ How many children have lead poisoning?

✱ What care do these children get? How many homes get fixed?

✱ What can be done to stop lead poisoning once and for all in our community?

BUILDING A COMMUNITY DRIVE FOR BETTER LEAD SCREENING.

✱ Use a map. (The *Community Tool Kit: Brief Guide to Options for Improving Medicaid Lead Screening* has more on this.) Show:

- “Target” areas, where lead poisoning is most likely.
- Where screening is taking place.
- Where lead poisoned children live.

✱ Make a goal:

- More screening for children in target areas.
- Better follow-up care for lead poisoned children.
- Emergency response: relocation of lead poisoned children or short-term emergency repairs for their homes.

✱ Reach your goal:

- Talk to the health department, to doctors, and to HMOs in your community about more screening for children in target areas.
- Remember that Medicaid pays for lead screening and follow-up care for children on Medicaid.
- Use your local newspaper or TV to tell your story and show where more screening should be done.
- Ask for regular reports from your health department on screening and follow-up care in target areas.
- Keep attention focused on the problem.
- Recruit an elected official to help make your case: a council member, state legislator, or member of Congress can make a big difference in attracting and keeping attention and resources for lead screening and follow-up.