Central Michigan District Health Department

Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

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PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

To: **Area Newspapers**

From: **Kelly Conley, Personal Health Director**

RE: **National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (Oct. 20-26, 2019)**

Release Date: **Immediately (October 3, 2019)**

"LEAD-FREE KIDS FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE"

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), along with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), is participating in National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. The annual event focuses on the many ways to prevent lead exposure to children before they are harmed.

The CDC estimates that nearly half a million children living in the United States have elevated blood lead levels at 5 micrograms per deciliter or higher. Anyone can become lead poisoned but children between 6 months and 6 years of age are most at risk. Most children who have been exposed to lead do not act or look sick until their blood levels are seriously elevated. Lead can often be found in homes built before 1978 that used lead based paint, in contaminated soil and water as well as in some products that come to the United States from other countries.

Despite the continued presence of lead in the environment, lead poisoning is entirely preventable. Preventing exposure to lead is the best way to protect children. The Central Michigan District Health Department wants to remind parents it is very important to have their children tested and to learn the risks of lead exposure. Elevated lead levels can cause serious health problems related to delays in growth and development, reduced IQ, behavior and attention difficulties, hearing loss and kidney damage.

Parents can reduce a child's exposure to lead in many ways. Here are some simple things you can do to help protect your family:

- Get your home tested. Before you buy or rent an older home, ask about lead. Talk with your local health department about testing paint and dust in your home for lead if you live in a home built before 1978.

- If you are remodeling, renovate safely. Common renovation activities (like sanding, cutting, replacing windows, and more) can create hazardous lead dust. If you are planning renovations, use contractors certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (visit www.epa.gov/leadexternal for information).
- Talk with your child's doctor about a simple blood lead test. If you are pregnant or nursing, talk with your doctor about exposure to sources of lead.
- If your child is on or eligible for the Women, Infant and Children Program (WIC) ask about lead screening at the WIC office. The Central Michigan District Health Department's WIC program provides this screening to children less than 5 years of age with Medicaid. We also do lead testing for kids with private insurance on WIC and if your child is enrolled in an Early Head Start or related preschool program.
- Remove recalled toys and toy jewelry from children if they have lead in them and discard as appropriate. Stay up-to-date on current recalls by visiting the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website: www.cpsc.govexternal.
- Get the facts! Our health department branch offices can provide you with helpful information about preventing childhood lead poisoning. Contact us by phone or visit our website at www.cmdhd.org. You can also call 1-800-424-LEAD.
- For more information visit the following sites: http://www.Michigan.gov/lead, http://leadfreekids.org, or http://www/cdc/gov/

The World Health Organization (WHO) reminds us that there is no known level of lead exposure that is considered safe. Take action! Lead poisoning is 100% preventable.

Have your child tested!

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org, LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @CMiDHD.

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