

Florida Impact of Cuts to CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Each year, approximately 300 children and 448 adults in Florida are newly diagnosed with lead poisoning. Florida's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and its partnering local agencies follow up on these cases, inspect the homes, and order units with lead hazards to be repaired. Approximately 300 cases are followed or managed each year statewide.

In 2012, Florida's lead program is receiving \$593,887 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (FY2011 funding). That funding is scheduled to end in August 2012, at which time the State will determine what funding exists to continue the program and staff. Currently, CDC funding pays for five (5) full-time and six (6) part-time positions in the state. In 2011, that funding was reduced by approximately 33% from approximately \$900,000 to about \$594,000.

Florida has maintained a surveillance system since 2004 to capture and aggregate the results of blood tests for lead. Between 2008 to the end of 2011, the system has obtained screening records for 800,000 tests and that is counting children only. The surveillance data enables Florida's CLPPP to identify high-risk areas for lead poisoning and track patterns over time. The data is also used in program planning and other federal grant applications including for HUD, CDC, and EPA. CDC funding enables Florida's program to respond to emerging lead threats. For example, in some cases, multiple children in the same family may have elevated blood lead levels. The program's environmental health professional conducts an environmental inspection to identify a lead hazard in the home or child care facility. In addition, the program also creates opportunities for outreach by: (1) providing training and technical assistance to sub-grantees and partners; (2) distributing educational materials to at-risk populations to increase awareness and reduce exposure; (3) coordinating public announcements during Lead Poisoning Prevention Week to increase awareness and promote blood lead screening among high-risk populations; and (4) notifying parents and caregivers through "Florida Lead Alert Network" concerning recalled lead contaminated products in distribution throughout the US.

The CDC-funded CLPPP helps ensure medical provider compliance with Medicaid and other requirements for lead screening services for eligible children. Testing is the only way to discover if a child has been poisoned. The program also helps both the state and local lead hazard control programs funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to identify the highest-risk families whose homes most need abatement and to target resources to communities with concentrations of lead-poisoning cases.

If funding is not restored for the program at CDC in FY2013, Florida will suffer from a reduction in vital services. Without the surveillance data provided through the CDC program, there will be no way to treat the existing threat or track a possible resurgence in blood lead levels. Without funding, Florida's numerous outreach programs will either be cut or scaled back and high-risk counties will become even more vulnerable since state and local collaboration and coordination will be reduced greatly. The impact of the elimination of CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program is significant, and Florida's children stand to lose significantly. Cuts in funding will severely curtail the successful program Florida has worked for close to 10 years to build. Now is not the time to dismantle CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.