

Find It, Fix It, Fund It: A Lead Elimination Action Drive

In the wake of the Flint lead water crisis and increased national will to address the problem, NCHH and the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition have launched a bold new drive to eliminate lead poisoning. It's simple yet comprehensive: Find lead hazards, eliminate them, and build the political will to create key public investments and policies to do so. NCHH and the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition are leading initiatives to eliminate lead paint hazards and dramatically increase lead poisoning surveillance and home-based follow-up services, and will support allies and partners in eliminating lead hazards in water and other sources.

Where We Are Today

The Good News

- We know how to stop lead poisoning by preventing exposures.
- The World Health Organization concluded that eliminating lead hazards is more cost-effective than even vaccines.ⁱ

The Bad News

- Flint and other cities in the news are only the tip of the iceberg. In the U.S., there are over half a million children with elevated blood lead levels, with higher rates among low-income children and children of color.ⁱⁱ
- Lead poisoning is responsible for 674,000 deaths each year around the world.ⁱⁱⁱ
- We know that tens of millions of U.S. homes have lead water pipes, lead paint, and other hazards, but we still do not know exactly where they are.^{iv}
- It makes no sense to wait and find children already exposed to lead when we can prevent these exposures instead.
- U.S. companies continue to produce lead paint. Although the world's largest paint company stopped making new lead paint in 2011, companies like Sherwin Williams and Valspar continue to make new lead-based paint, contaminating homes around the globe, needlessly poisoning children and adults for years to come.^v

What We Should Do (A Three-Point Plan): Find It, Fix It, Fund It

- **FIND IT: FIND THE LEAD HAZARDS IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.**
 - **Identify all lead hazards** and their sources in our homes, yards, schools, and playgrounds, including lead water pipes, lead paint, and lead dust and soil hazards, using validated measurement and sampling methods. Disclose results through open-source data and use GIS mapping to make data available, accessible, and understandable to all. Incentivize finding and disclosing lead hazards in private sector housing.
 - **Require lead-based paint risk assessments in all HUD inspection protocols**, including the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program.
- **FIX IT: TAKE BOTH IMMEDIATE AND LONG-RANGE ACTIONS TO PROTECT CHILDREN.**
 - **For homes with lead paint hazards**, implement immediate, proven measures to correct deteriorated paint and clean up lead dust and soil. Conduct a long-term effort to remove residential lead paint in existing housing.
 - **For homes with high lead levels in water**, immediately provide filters and/or bottled water. Begin a long-term program to replace all lead drinking water pipes.*

FIND IT, FIX IT, FUND IT: A Lead Elimination Action Drive

- **Develop, implement, and fund a new national plan including all government agencies to eliminate lead poisoning.** In 2000, the federal government released a strategy to eliminate lead poisoning by 2010 through a cabinet-level President's Task Force on Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks. We did not meet the 2010 goal, and there is no new goal; nor is there an updated comprehensive funding plan as there was in 2000.
- **Re-establish the CDC National Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention.** This was the nation's only scientific advisory group dedicated to lead poisoning prevention before it was disbanded in 2012.
- **Update all outdated lead regulations using the most recent science and enforce them:**
 - EPA Safe Drinking Water Regulations – last updated 25 years ago.
 - EPA Lead Dust and Soil Hazard Standards– last updated 15 years ago.
 - OSHA Lead Standards – last updated in 1978 (industry) and 1996 (construction).
 - HUD – Federally Assisted and Owned Housing – last updated 16 years ago.
 - EPA Renovation, Repair, and Painting – issued eight years ago. Require dust testing at the end of the job to ensure that it was cleaned up correctly and no hazards remain as is already the case in HUD housing. Make training and enforcement more widespread.
- **Make all regulations consistent with new CDC blood lead guidelines and ensure that clinical laboratories report these levels** to CDC and state and local health and housing authorities.
- **Require all Medicaid plans to reimburse** for lead poisoning home visits and risk assessments, and for collection and analysis of lead samples.
- Ensure that **children harmed by lead** receive special education needs assessments, education interventions, and other programs to help mitigate the effects of lead poisoning.*
- **Expand the number of children tested.** All at-risk children should have their blood tested at least twice before age two, especially Medicaid-eligible children. Increase CDC resources to provide the surveillance results for all states and large cities (populations over 50,000).
- Stop **U.S. paint companies** from making, selling, or applying new lead paint and work to ban it worldwide.*
- **Conduct new research** to find better ways to identify and remediate all lead hazards and all people at risk, especially children. Conduct research on how best to help children already exposed to lead.
- **FUND IT: STOP THE DISINVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN.**
 - **Immediately restore and expand funding** for CDC's lead program to at least \$35 million and HUD to at least \$230 million annually. Full funding for comprehensive lead poisoning surveillance, outreach, and education is at least \$60 million for CDC. Full funding for lead paint hazard assessment and control needs to be recalculated in a new national lead elimination plan for HUD.
 - **Provide emergency funding to Flint** and other places with similar findings.*
 - EPA funding for enforcement and training grants needs to be increased.*
 - Fund efforts to find and eliminate all lead water pipes and all lead paint hazards.*
 - **Provide grants, tax credits, and incentives** to find and address lead hazards in low-income privately owned homes with children.*
 - **Fully fund Head Start** and special education for any child with elevated blood lead levels.*

*NCHH and the Coalition support these efforts but do not lead or play a major role in them.

ⁱ World Health Organization (2010). *Childhood Lead Poisoning*. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.who.int/ceh/publications/leadguidance.pdf>

ⁱⁱ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013, April 5). Blood lead levels in children aged 1–5 years — United States, 1999–2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, 62(13), 245–248. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm6213.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Lim, S.S. et al. (2012, December 15). A comparative risk assessment of burden of disease and injury attributable to 67 risk factors and risk factor clusters in 21 regions, 1990–2010: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010. *The Lancet*, 380(9859), 2224–2260. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(12\)61766-3/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(12)61766-3/abstract)

^{iv} Jacobs, D. E., Clickner, R. L., Zhou, J. L., Viet, S. M., Marker, D. A., Rogers, J. W., et al. (2002, October). The prevalence of lead-based paint hazards in U.S. housing. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 110(10), A599–A606. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1241046/>

^v Dissel, R., & Zeltner, B. (2016, April 22) Paint giant PPG announces it will phase lead out of its products by 2020. *The Plain Dealer* [online] Retrieved May 9, 2016, from http://www.cleveland.com/healthfit/index.ssf/2016/04/paint_giant_ppg_announces_phase.html

For more information about [NCHH's lead advocacy](#), the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition's lead advocacy, or the Find It, Fix It, Fund It action drive, contact Julie Kruse at jkruse@nchh.org.

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