

Mississippi—Impact Statement

Each year, approximately 208 children are newly diagnosed with lead poisoning in Mississippi. The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) and county health department officials follow up on these cases, and inspect the homes of those children whose blood lead levels are greater than 10 µg/dL. Reports indicate that there is need for abatement and relocation of children and their families during the clean-up period or permanently relocate them, pending the severity of the exposure. More importantly, there is need for lead legislation for screening all at-risk children in Mississippi since presently only Medicaid eligible children are screened, and, of these only approximately 17% of these children are screened.

The MSCLPPP provides case management services for children with blood lead levels greater than or equal to 10 µg/dL, environmental investigations for children with a single venous blood lead level greater than 20 µg/dL or two venous blood lead levels of 15-19 µg/dL at least 3 months apart, and statewide health education and outreach regarding the dangers of lead poisoning, testing and prevention.

MSCLPPP has trained health educators to provide more robust lead poisoning prevention education to health care providers, families, organizations that work with high-risk families, and others in its nine public health districts. In addition, it works diligently with partners to ensure that its goals and objectives are met. Some of these partners and examples of activities are as follows: Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians and Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics receive health education to increase physicians' knowledge of lead poisoning and the importance of screening and blood lead testing; Mississippi College of Obstetrics and Gynecology receives health education about the importance of lead screening of pregnant women; Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality provides lists of state-accredited training and community outreach initiatives on the hazards of lead-based paint, and copies of the lead-based paint regulations and brochures; Mississippi Poison Control Center assists in identifying areas of high risk; Office of the Governor, Division of Medicaid assists in lead poisoning prevention education and outreach activities; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development serves as a liaison between public housing authorities and the MSDH regarding notifications of children in public housing with elevated blood lead levels.

The CLPPP Advisory Committee utilizes the Lead Elimination Plan Evaluation Report to determine which activities should be continued into the following year and what types of new activities may need to be added. The Lead Elimination Plan Evaluation Report will thus guide long-term strategic planning for addressing lead poisoning in Mississippi.

MSCLPPP relies on the Center for Disease and Control prevention (CDC) funding to continue the lead prevention program, enabling it to maintain a surveillance program to identify high-risk areas for lead poisoning, track patterns over time, and to enhance and evaluate its program. In 2011, MSDH received \$396,000. A reduction in funding in 2012 and beyond will result in a dramatic reduction in vital services for lead poisoning prevention thereby increasing the risk of lead poisoning and all of its related diseases. In addition, Mississippi will suffer from the lack of CDC's technical assistance and guidance to the MSCLPPP for case management, environmental investigations, and lead poisoning policies and legislation. Presently, Mississippi ranks the worst in socio-economy as well as one of the highest prevalence of disease and no to poor healthcare. Reducing CDC funding for Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention will result in a significant impact on children who are lead poisoned as well as an economic impact on society.