



## **Impact on Children in Pennsylvania: Reduction of CDC Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program Funds**

### **Status of Lead & Other Home Hazards**

- **Old housing stock**: Indoor environmental health and safety hazards, including lead, are disproportionately found in older, substandard housing. Lead-based paint was finally banned for residential use in 1978 but forty percent of Pennsylvania's housing units were built before 1950 (2000 Census).
  - In Philadelphia, about 95 percent of the city's housing stock was built before 1978.
- **Too many poisoned children**: Each year, approximately 3,800 PA children are newly diagnosed with lead poisoning – the second highest rate in the nation. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Health's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) in partnership with 11 agencies across the state coordinate efforts to prevent, detect, and treat children with elevated blood lead levels and order units with lead hazards to be repaired. The goal for the PA CLPPP is to eliminate elevated blood lead levels (greater than 10 micrograms per deciliter) in children statewide. Scientific research indicates the need to start helping even more children with blood lead levels below the current action level.
  - In Philadelphia, approximately 1,000 children are poisoned each year.
- **Additional significant home hazards**: Statewide, in 2000, hospitalizations associated with asthma for children less than five years of age occurred at the rate of 51.74 per 10,000 population. Asthma triggers such as mold, mildew, and dust mites continue to disproportionately impact the most vulnerable populations living in the oldest PA housing.
  - In Philadelphia, a sample of homes with lead poisoned children was found to have at least one family member with asthma. The 22.8 percent childhood asthma prevalence in Philadelphia is almost 75 percent higher than for the US as a whole (13.1 percent) with some low-income, predominantly minority neighborhoods in Philadelphia suffering asthma rates between 39 – 55 percent.

### **Actual & Predicted Impact of Proposed CDC Funding**

- The state stands to lose at minimum approximately \$100,000 – having previously been awarded a grant for \$688,000 that is now capped (for all states) at \$600,000.
- For years the CDC designated Philadelphia among the five highest risk cities in the nation making the city eligible for separate CDC funding. Last year the CDC eliminated this funding. The Philadelphia CLPPP lost \$1,280,800 in annual CDC Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program funding which has virtually eliminated the city's lead

poisoning prevention programming generally. In particular loss of the funding has ended the city's successful Lead Safe Babies and Lead Safe Communities primary prevention programs operated by CLPPP and three community partners which every year had provided services to 1,500 families with newborns in high-risk neighborhoods to help protect children from lead exposure. Funding for the three community-based agencies and five CLPPP staff ended.

- The elimination of direct CDC funding to Philadelphia CLPPP means that the Pennsylvania CLPPP will now be responsible for lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes initiatives in Philadelphia while continuing to address high risk areas throughout the rest of the state. The PA CLPPP will not, however, receive any additional funding to cover Philadelphia; instead it will be required to take on more with less.

## **Restore funding for the CDC Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.**