

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

Each year, approximately 100 children in Arizona are newly diagnosed with lead poisoning. As funding permits, the Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS) and its partnering local agencies follow up on these cases, inspect the homes, and order units with lead hazards to be repaired. Scientific research indicates the need to start helping even more children with blood lead levels below the current action level.

In 2012, Arizona's lead program is receiving \$417,618 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 Arizona will determine what funding exists to continue the program and staff. In 2010, CDC funding paid for 1.5 full-time positions to be filled in the state.

Arizona has maintained a surveillance system since 2007 to capture and aggregate the results of blood tests for lead. The system has obtained screening records for 155,425 of tests. The surveillance data enables the Arizona DHS to identify high-risk areas for lead poisoning and to 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 Arizona'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. Arizona's lead program also tests numerous spices imported from Asia. In addition, the program also creates opportunities for outreach in the forms of quarterly meetings and educational presentations.

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 program 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.

Arizona's lead program receives no Medicaid reimbursement for environmental investigations, case management, or any other lead poisoning prevention-related services.

If funding is not restored for the program at CDC in FY2013, Arizona 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, the program itself could be eliminated. The impact of the elimination of CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program is significant, and Arizona's children stand to lose significantly. Without the surveillance data, there will be no way to treat the existing threat or track a possible resurgence in blood lead levels. Now is not the time to dismantle CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.