

**Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund  
Advisory Board Meeting  
April 10, 2015 • 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM  
Maine Health Access Foundation  
150 Capital Street, Augusta, Maine**



## Meeting Notes

**Participants:** Barbara Leonard (Chair), MaryAnn Amrich, Peter Doran, Gail Lombardi, Michelle Polascek, Syd Sewall; **Maine CDC Staff:** Andy Smith, Eric Frohberg, Karyn Butts; **Maine Housing Staff:** Amber McAllister

### I. Lead Poisoning Prevention Program Updates

Eric Frohberg, Program Manager of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, provided an update on the following topics.

#### a. Staffing

The lead program has filled the environmental coordinator position. Dana Leeper will fill this role, and will be starting with the lead program on April 15, 2015. Dana will come to the lead program after serving the past couple of years on staff at Healthy Androscoggin, the Healthy Maine Partnership serving the cities of Lewiston and Auburn. At Healthy Androscoggin, Dana was the lead staff for their lead poisoning prevention activities.

Susan Lee, the health coordinator for the program is expected to retire at the end of June, 2015. In preparation for her retirement, Sue has been cross-training Leslie Walleigh, a public health physician within the Environmental and Occupational Health Unit. Leslie will assume the role of health coordinator until a permanent replacement is hired.

#### b. Pediatric Blood Lead Testing Guidelines Updated

In March, the lead program issued updated blood lead testing guidelines for providers. The guidelines recommend that providers now follow-up on all blood lead test results 5 ug/dL and above. The update aligns Maine CDC's guidelines with those of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The updated guidelines are available on the program's website: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/eohp/lead/providers.shtml>.

Concurrent with the change to the testing guidelines, Maine CDC is expanding services provided to families of children with confirmed blood lead levels of 5 ug/dL to less than 10 ug/dL. These families now receive an offer for a free home lead dust test kit through the mail. Maine CDC is also asking providers to encourage families to complete the lead dust testing. Maine CDC will follow up on home lead dust test results that are above a certain threshold with an environmental investigation. Over the coming months, the lead program will be adjusting how lead dust testing is offered to these families to find the methods that produce the greatest return.

#### c. Data Portal Update

Andy Smith, state toxicologist and director of the Maine CDC Environmental and Occupational Health Programs, reviewed recent updates to lead poisoning content of the Maine Tracking Network online public health data portal. The updates include the following:

- Addition of 2013 data
- Return of screening data for selected areas, now using births as population denominator to calculate rates

- Updated selected area maps, now using shaded census block groups instead of dot maps
- Move of geography selection tools from tabs above the displays to selection panel where all other query options are located
- Shift of language used in labels, titles, and other display text away from use of the term elevated blood lead level to text that specifies the blood level threshold—in anticipation of adding data for blood lead levels 5-9 ug/dL

## **II. Lewiston-Auburn Updates**

Eric Frohberg updated the board on developments related to burgeoning lead poisoning prevention efforts in Lewiston-Auburn. Major points covered included the following.

- The Lead Hazard Control Grant (LHCG) is up and running and is being run by the City of Lewiston. Related to the LHCG—there is now a code enforcement officer funded by the LHCG. The intention is that this will increase buy-in among the code officers, and consequently, increased enforcement actions. Code enforcement officers can issue violations based on visual inspection and refer units to the state lead program for environmental lead investigations based on lead check and photographic evidence of damaged lead paint in a unit.
- An outcome broker has just been hired for the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative in Lewiston-Auburn, the new broker will be starting soon and will be responsible for coordinating activities, funding streams, etc, among the various agencies and organizations involved in the GHHI.
- The Lead Sub-Committee of the Public Health Committee has developed a five-year plan to address lead poisoning in the community and is beginning to implement it.
- Pine Tree Legal has begun working with tenants in Lewiston-Auburn to provide assistance to on housing issues. The lead program is working with Pine Tree Legal to determine if sharing information about locations where lead abatements have been ordered or performed complies with confidentiality clauses included in the Lead Poisoning Control Act. The current analysis by the Attorney General's office is that these data are not protected in the same way that information about a child's blood lead level is.
- There is an investigative journalist developing a story around lead poisoning in Maine, but with particular focus on lead poisoning in Lewiston-Auburn. The lead program is working with the journalist to supply information related to lead abatements through a Freedom of Access Act request the journalist has made.

## **III. Proposed Legislation**

Andy Smith briefed the board on a bill currently before the Maine Legislature (LD 1115) that would change some of the current language in the Lead Poisoning Control Act, and the impact those changes would have on the work of the Maine CDC lead program. The bill would change the blood lead level at which the Maine CDC must provide services such as environmental investigations from the current intervention level (confirmed 15 ug/dL or higher; or persistent 10-14 ug/dL) to confirmed 5-9 ug/dL. Maine CDC estimates that the change would result in a nine-fold increase in the number of environmental inspections the program would need to conduct annually. The bill is being heard by the DHHS committee on Monday, April 13, 2015.

**Action Item:** The board asked to be updated on the progress of the bill as appropriate.

## **IV. Discussion of Priorities and Funding**

Eric Frohberg presented revenue received to date from the fee assessed on paint sold in Maine. The lead program has received most of the checks; revenue looks to be about the same as the previous budget year, with receipts totaling just over \$600,000. Eric then presented the budget assumptions the

lead program is currently using to plan its FY16 budget, as well as related uncertainties (e.g., the DHHS budget proposal related to funding for Healthy Maine Partnerships, and the length of time LPPF resources will be needed to pay for the public health physician to cover the health coordinator position after Susan Lee retires).

Based on this information the board suggested that: 1) the lead program delay contracts with partners for all funding levels except the high-density areas until uncertainties are resolved; and, 2) that the board convene in September to review budgetary issues once uncertainties are resolved.

**V. Next Meeting**

The board agreed to meet again in September 2015, and asked staff to begin looking to schedule this meeting sometime in July.