



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Health Department

Administration

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653 phone (414) 286-3521 fax (414) 286-5990
web site: www.milwaukee.gov/health

For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Kawanza Newson
414-286-3548 Office
414-732-7250 Mobile

City of Milwaukee Health Department receives \$6.9 million HUD grants to protect kids from lead-based hazards

The City of Milwaukee Health Department has received two grants from The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to eliminate lead hazards in homes within the city.

The announcement was made Monday by Mayor Tom Barrett and Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker at the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center, a contractual partner in lead abatement efforts.

“While we have made great strides in reducing the number of children impacted in the city, we know that one out of five children in our highest risk neighborhoods is affected,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker.

“For this reason, we continue to seek strategic partnerships to help further our impact in the community, particularly Milwaukee’s north side primary Target Area, where lead poisoning rates are 14.1%, or nine times greater than the national average of 1.6%,” he said.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded more than \$131 million in grants to 61 local projects to conduct a wide range of activities, from eliminating lead hazards in homes to increasing public awareness about childhood lead poisoning. Lead is a known toxin that can impair children’s development and may even cause death at high levels.

The City of Milwaukee Health Department’s Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program received two grants that total \$6.9 million. These grants will enable the abatement of more than 1,100 housing units over the next three years through well-developed partnerships and a strong commitment by Milwaukee rental property owners. Contracts with four community-based agencies will allow us to conduct interim control and educational activities.

“This translates to protection of thousands of children from lead poisoning,” said Mayor Barrett.

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) operates a Primary Prevention program which provides money to abate lead-based paint hazards in windows for eligible property owners. If a property is eligible, a property owner may qualify for assistance to make the property lead-safe. An application can be obtained by calling 414-286-5025. The program guidelines and application form are now available online at <http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/router.asp?docid=2828>.

Milwaukee's goal is the eradication of childhood lead poisoning by the year 2010. The MHD has established a model to reduce lead poisoning in children through community and housing-based intervention that has been replicated nationwide. It is estimated that there are approximately 53,000 high risk housing units in the City of Milwaukee. Since May 1997, a total of nearly 13,000 housing units have been made lead-safe through enforcement efforts, innovative partnerships and HUD-funded primary prevention subsidies.

Lead is particularly harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of fetuses, newborns and young children. The effects of even low level lead poisoning include developmental delay, low IQ, hyperactivity, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, impaired hearing and stunted growth.

The MHD recommends blood lead screening tests for all children three times before the age of 3, but only about HALF of the children who should be screened are actually receiving this service.

Screening children for lead poisoning serves two important purposes: 1) ensuring children are staying lead-safe, and 2) identifying lead poisoned children for early intervention and treatment.