

Preliminary Strategic Plan for the Elimination of Lead Poisoning in Peoria County, Illinois

2004-2010

Produced by the Lead Poisoning Elimination Work Group
Peoria City/County Health Department

Participating agencies:

Head Start/Early Head Start
Heartland Community Health Clinic
Mt. Hawley Pediatrics
Peoria Citizens' Committee for Economic Opportunity
Peoria City/County Health Department

- Nursing Group
- Environmental Health Group

University of Illinois Extension Food and Nutrition Program

July 28, 2004

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I. Mission:

We intend to achieve the national Healthy People 2010 goal of eliminating blood lead levels at or above 10 mcg/dL in children living in Peoria County.

II. Goals:

1. Peoria County will provide lead-safe housing and environment for its children.
2. Parents and the community will know about lead hazards and how to prevent the exposure of children to lead.
3. The community will follow recommended lead screening and follow-up practices to detect and manage any lead exposures to children that may occur.

III. Purpose and Background:

While incidence of elevated lead levels in young children has been falling over the past 30 years in Peoria and the nation, Peoria remains one of the communities with a serious lead poisoning problem. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data, Illinois has one of the highest rates of childhood lead poisoning in the nation. Three Peoria ZIP codes rank in the top ten urban ZIP codes in Illinois for rate of elevated lead levels in children under six years. We have identified four ZIP codes (61603, 61604, 61605, and 61606) in the older neighborhoods of the City of Peoria where prevalence of elevated lead levels in children under six years old during 2003 was greater than 20 percent. These areas have been identified as the target area for this project

The first condition necessary for lead poisoning to occur is the existence of environmental sources of exposure. Housing and other structures built prior to the banning of lead paint in 1977 poses the primary environmental risk to children. Overall condition of housing stock also contributes to the environmental risk. Peoria is one of the oldest cities in Illinois, with some housing stock dating back to the middle of the 19th century. In Peoria County as a whole, 66 percent of housing units were built prior to 1970 according to the 2000 Census. In the older areas of the city which are the target of this project, 84 percent of homes were built prior to 1970. Further, 44 percent of housing units in this area were built before 1940. Also, 56 percent of the units in the project area are renter-occupied. Both age of housing and low rates of home ownership often correlate with deteriorated conditions and risk of lead exposure to children.

Poverty also contributes to the risk of lead poisoning in children in Peoria. Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is an indicator of the prevalence of poverty in a community. Approximately 45 percent of infants born in Peoria County participate in WIC at some point in their first year. Approximately seventy percent of those infants live in the target area for this project, and are thus exposed to both poverty and environmental risk of lead poisoning.

Screening of children for lead exposure is recommended to identify exposed children early, in order to prevent further elevation of lead levels, and to identify and eliminate risk of lead

poisoning in the child's environment. Preliminary data from the Illinois Department of Public Health indicates that approximately 55% of children participating in Medicaid in Peoria County were screened for lead exposure at least once before their seventh birthday. Additionally, approximately 35% of children less than six years of age residing in the high-risk areas of the City of Peoria were screened for lead exposure during 2003, according to data reported through the STELLAR system. This indicates a fair level of screening among the highest-risk children in Peoria County.

However, in the remainder of Peoria County, only four percent of children less than six years old were screened during 2003. While this may underrepresent actual screening levels, anecdotal reports also indicate that physicians in Peoria County tend not to screen children in their care unless lead poisoning is suspected clinically, or screening is required. Also, providers in our community tend to screen only children from the State-identified high-risk ZIP codes, without assessing children living in other areas for individual risks of lead exposure. Despite the high rate of elevated lead levels in Peoria's highest-risk areas, that rate likely is underestimated both in high-risk areas and the county as a whole. Provider lead screening practices need to improve among all groups of children in Peoria County. At the same time, the quality of data on lead screening and follow-up in Peoria County needs to improve substantially.

This plan addresses these risks by identifying interventions to reduce risks of lead exposure to Peoria County's children, and to improve the capacity of the community to identify exposed children, and to identify the sources of their exposure. Screening of children, public education and improvement of data collection need to be addressed for the entire county. The older neighborhoods of the City of Peoria, with ZIP codes cited above, have been identified as the primary target area for community mobilization and source mitigation activities.

The plan is also titled "preliminary" because it is a work in progress. Work is beginning in areas most clearly in need of intervention, such as screening and community education. Improved data support and engagement of additional partners are needed to complete the task set forth in the mission and goals of the plan. The goals and activities identified in this plan are intended to move Peoria County toward achievement of the goal of eliminating lead poisoning and lead exposure of children in Peoria by 2010.

IV. Objectives and Activities:

Goal 1: Lead-safe housing and environment

Will be achieved by accomplishing the following objectives:

- Use available public funding to mitigate or abate lead risks in housing and public buildings built before 1978, and occupied or frequented by young children.
- Work with local government to use housing codes and other strategies to reduce property deterioration and resultant lead risks.
- Work with construction, real estate, and home retail businesses serving the target area to implement strategies to accomplish lead risk mitigation or abatement during renovation or property transfer.

- Provide information to owners and occupants of residences built before 1978 on measures to prevent lead exposure of children during renovation and occupancy.

Activities for FY 2005:

1. Maximize use of Federal and state funded programs to mitigate lead risks in older housing occupied by children less than six years of age.
 - Identify opportunities to maximize effectiveness of working relationships among Peoria City/County Health Department (PC/CHD), Peoria Citizens' Council on Economic Opportunity (PCCEO), City of Peoria, and oversight agencies.
 - Work with State and local officials to maximize use of public resources for mitigation of lead risks.
 - Explore creative ways to leverage homeowner and private resources to accomplish mitigation of lead risks.
2. Initiate/continue discussions with city and county government, real estate and renovation/construction businesses, and nonprofit agencies interested in affordable housing.

Responsibility:

PC/CHD Nursing and Environmental Health staff, PCCEO, Lead Poisoning Elimination Work Group

Resources:

Get the Lead Out (GLO) (State of Illinois HUD grant), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Lead Elimination grant, Peoria County public health levy.

Evaluation:

1. Seventy-two housing units will be mitigated as permitted by available grant and local match funds.
2. At least five new partners will be strategically identified, and engaged in community lead poisoning elimination efforts during State FY 2005 (July 1-June 30, 2005).

Activities for FY 2006-7:

1. Continue activities 1 and 2 above; evaluate effectiveness.
2. Implement plans developed during FY 2005 to assure lead safety with real estate transfers and private renovation.
3. Additional activities as planned during FY 2005.

Goal 2: Parent and community education

Will be achieved by accomplishing the following objectives:

- Educating parents, beginning prior to conception, about risks and measures to prevent prenatal and early childhood lead exposure in home environments.
- Providing information on lead-safe renovation to tradespeople and homeowners contemplating renovation work on older homes.
- Creating community awareness of lead risks by providing general information on the risks of lead exposure to the community at large.

FY 2005 Activities:

1. Media campaign informing community about prevalence of lead toxicity in children in Peoria, sources of lead exposure, and sources of information about prevention, funded by CDC grant statewide. Activities conducted locally in collaboration with Illinois Department of Public Health.
2. Provide information on lead-safe housekeeping and renovation to residents of high-risk neighborhoods and communities, enlisting hardware and paint stores, home center retailers, non-profit agencies, and neighborhood associations.
3. Provide information to expectant parents and parents of children age 0-5 on health risks of lead exposure, and measures for lead risk reduction, through PC/CHD maternal and child health programs, University of Illinois Extension nutrition programs, other community health and social services.
4. Develop library of educational materials and promote use by schools, daycares, medical offices, agency staff, and others. Include locally-developed materials as necessary.

Responsibility:

Activities #:

1. PC/CHD Nursing, Environmental Health, Health Promotion and Epidemiology Groups
2. PC/CHD Environmental Health Group
3. PC/CHD Nursing Group
4. PC/CHD Nursing Group, Lead Poisoning Elimination Work Group

Resources:

Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Family Health grants, CDC Lead Elimination grant, Peoria County public health levy.

Evaluation:

1. Log calls received in response to media campaign.

2. Record business and homeowner/occupant response to information/education, including quantity of brochures distributed, inquiries generated by education materials and contacts.
3. Monitor screening levels and EBLL rates in identified high-risk ZIP codes, using quarterly STELLAR software reports.

Activities for 2006-7:

1. Repeat Activity 1 as resources are available.
2. Continue activities 2-3 above, evaluate progress.
3. Implement other activities to be developed during FY 2005.

Goal 3: Improvement of lead screening and management of elevated lead levels

Will be achieved by accomplishing the following objectives:

- Providing information about lead screening and management of elevated lead levels to health care providers.
- Work with existing programs serving young children to maximize lead screening opportunities.
- Coordinate communication of screening information to assure timely and appropriate follow-up of elevated lead levels in young children.

2005 Activities:

1. Provide lead screening and elevated blood lead level (EBLL) management guidelines to medical practices through PC/CHD Access to Care program.
2. Work with Healthy Moms/Healthy Kids (HM/HK) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) to assure recommended screening of children served in programs.
3. Market WIC services to improve retention of eligible, at-risk children between first and fifth birthdays, to reduce nutritional risk of lead absorption, and to assure recommended screening.
4. Provide case management of lead-exposed children to assure referral to resources for medical treatment, residential lead abatement or lead-safe housing alternatives, and nutritional risk reduction.

Responsibility:

PC/CHD Nursing Group leadership; Lead, WIC, and HM/HK Program staff; Lead Poisoning Elimination Work Group (primarily Activity #1)

Resources:

WIC, HM/HK grants, CHLPP grant, GLO grant, CDC Lead Elimination grant

Evaluation:

1. Measure percentage of children participating in WIC and HM/HK with lead screening results documented at appropriate ages.
2. Measure percentage of children with EBLLs participating in WIC through 5th birthday or as eligible.
3. Measure percentage of children with EBLLs who are case managed until a normal blood lead level is achieved.

Activities for 2006-7:

1. Repeat Activity 1 as resources are available.
2. Continue activities 2-3 above, evaluate progress.
3. Implement other activities developed during 2005.