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CONTACT: Kate Philips
philips@parkerphilips.com
215.850.4647 | mobile

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Pennsylvania Budget Proposal Misses Opportunity to Reduce Lead Paint Poisoning

A Reinvestment of State Surplus Should Include Lead Paint Remediation

HARRISBURG, PA (February 6, 2024) – The Shapiro Administration’s 2024-25 PA State Budget proposal fails to respond to the ongoing lead paint poisoning crisis in Pennsylvania and misses an important opportunity to help low-income homeowners and landlords with the resources they need to remove lead paint-based hazards in older properties.

“The proposed \$300 million for school environmental repairs is a welcome approach to reducing lead poisoning through lead water pipes in schools,” said Rosemarie Halt, Health Policy Consultant for Children First and Co-Chair, Lead-Free Promise Project. “But lead paint in homes is a major issue facing thousands of families that we must address with all due haste. In addition, lead poisoning education is needed for families to be aware of lead hazards and be screened for exposure to lead paint and other sources such as applesauce, which led to a recent product recall due to high lead content.

“We look forward to working with the Shapiro Administration, General Assembly, and Pennsylvania Department of Health to combat this 100 percent preventable issue,” added Halt.

Every year the promise of thousands of young children in Pennsylvania is diminished due to lead paint poisoning. Over the last 6 years, an average of almost 8,000 children were poisoned by lead each year. This number is likely even higher since testing rates of children under six years old for exposure are less than 20 percent.

Unfortunately, children exposed to lead are at significant risks for nervous system and brain damage that can cause developmental delays, hearing and speech issues, behavioral and impulse control problems, and slowed growth impacting their ability to learn and flourish in life. [A significant body of research](#) also demonstrates that early childhood lead exposure is a risk factor for future involvement in the criminal justice system. There is no safe level of lead exposure.

The Lead-Free Promise Project coalition members will work with the legislature to allocate funding for lead paint remediation in the final 2024-25 PA budget. The Lead-Free Promise Project (LFPP) launched its nearly 70-organization coalition in 2021 with the goal of removing lead paint-based hazards from homes and ensuring all children are screened for lead poisoning as part of a comprehensive wellness exam. Learn more at www.paleadfree.org.

The Lead-Free Promise Project is asking for \$3.5 million in the 2024–25 budget allocated as follows:

- \$1.0 million for lead remediation to provide low-income homeowners and landlords with resources to help remove lead paint-based hazards in older properties.
- \$1.0 million for workforce development to strengthen and develop the contractor workforce that is certified to perform lead remediation projects.
- \$1.5 million for the Public Information Campaign

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LFPP is part of ThrivingPA.org, a non-partisan, statewide campaign that seeks to improve the quality of and increase equitable access to a coordinated system of health supports, including access to comprehensive perinatal health services, children's health insurance, nutrition supports and lead screening and abatement.