



\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*

## PA LEAD-FREE PROMISE PROJECT URGES PASSAGE OF SENATE BILL 514

*Over 7,000 Pennsylvania children still get lead paint poisoned every year with less than 20% of children under the age of 5 tested*

CONTACT: Mary Wassell  
[wassell@parkerphilips.com](mailto:wassell@parkerphilips.com)

814.528.4930 | mobile

**HARRISBURG, PA (May 6, 2024)** — The Lead-Free Promise Project, a growing coalition of nearly 70 organizations across the state dedicated to ending childhood lead paint poisoning in Pennsylvania, urged the Pennsylvania Senate to pass SB 514, the ‘Childhood Blood Lead Test Act,’ and described the need to prioritize lead poisoning education, prevention and childhood testing at a Capitol Rotunda press conference on Monday, May 6th, 2024.

“Childhood lead poisoning is a 100 percent preventable tragedy, and SB 514 represents a crucial step towards mitigating its devastating impact, said Bruce Clash, Pennsylvania State Director of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids and a coalition partner of the Lead-Free Promise Project. “Today we stand united in our commitment to safeguarding the health and future of Pennsylvania's children.”

“By requiring lead testing for all children by age 2, with parental autonomy, we can ensure early detection and intervention to prevent lifelong harm.”

Pennsylvania continues to rank high for a wrong reason by having the second largest number of children who test positive for lead poisoning each year among all states. Effects of lead poisoning, an invisible threat, can rob children of their future by causing irreversible brain and nervous system damage, learning difficulties, and behavior problems — and there are not nearly enough resources to help suffering families. This bill would address this issue to ensure that all children in Pennsylvania receive blood tests, which is the only tool we have to confirm lead poisoning and help families mitigate health issues and eliminate further exposure.

Joining the Lead-Free Promise Project was PA Representative Donna Bullock, Majority Chair of the Children & Youth Committee; Dr. Christopher Russo, Director of pediatrics, women and children

services, and Medical Director for quality and innovation, WellSpan Health; Harriet Okatch, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Public Health, Thomas Jefferson University; and Dr. Karalyn Mcgrorty, parent of a child affected by severe lead poisoning and who is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Temple University, Thomas Jefferson University, and Ursinus College.

“There is no safe level of lead exposure in children, period. And lead is especially damaging to children in the first five years of life,” said Dr. Christopher Russo, director of pediatrics, women and children services, and medical director for quality and innovation, WellSpan Health. “Less than 20 percent of Pennsylvania children under age five are tested for lead. Every child is full of promise and potential and we can, and should, do more to ensure every child in Pennsylvania gets tested for lead so they can thrive in a safe environment.”

“I simply believe as Ben Franklin “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” said Karalyn McGrotty, Parent of child affected by severe lead poisoning & Adjunct Assistant Professor at Temple University, Thomas Jefferson University, and Ursinus College. “We know that lead is a hazardous material that harms our kids and has lifelong consequences. We need prevention now!”

SB 514, which has already been reported out of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee by a unanimous vote, aims to amend the Childhood Blood Lead Test Act (Act 150 of 2022) to further advance the fight to end childhood lead poisoning by requiring all children to be tested for lead by age 2. It also includes a parental opt out if the parents so choose.

The legislation was introduced by Senator Lisa Baker and backed by broad bipartisan support, including Senators Sharif Street, Art Haywood, Judy Ward, Vincent Hughes, Jimmy Dillon, John Kane, Devlin Robinson, Marty Flynn, Carolyn Comitta, Steven Santarsiero, Christine Tartaglione, Amanda Cappelletti, and Patrick Stefano.

Lead-Free Promise Project launched its nearly 70-organization coalition including law enforcement, health care, health insurance, housing, social service, education, business, civic and community organizations, and child advocates in 2021 vowing to remove 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 <https://paleadfree.org/>.

LFPP is part of ThrivingPa.org, a nonpartisan, 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.

###