



FEDERAL CUTS TO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, CDC CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PROGRAM THREATEN PENNSYLVANIA'S CHILDREN

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HARRISBURG, PA (April 4, 2025) — This week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced federal funding cuts and workforce reductions within the Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **which includes cutting the entirety of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program staff and funding.**

In addition, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency canceled and froze \$180 million dollars in grant funding for environmental work including lead programs, in its attack on programs that support poor and overlooked communities. Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI), which supports environmental health work by organizations across the mid-Atlantic including several programs in Pennsylvania, had an \$8 million grant canceled and \$52 million frozen. GHHI stated that this would be a severe blow to communities, forcing them to “largely or entirely” shutter programs while investments by hundreds of partner organizations “would be wasted and come to an end”.

The Lead-Free Promise Project (LFPP)—a coalition of nearly 80 organizations across Pennsylvania—condemns this decision, which will have a devastating impact on state and local health department resources to prevent, screen, and respond to childhood lead poisoning. This puts thousands of Pennsylvania children at greater risk of lead poisoning and health consequences.

“This decision undermines decades of progress in preventing childhood lead poisoning,” said Rosemarie Halt, Co-Chair at the Lead-Free Promise Project. “Pennsylvania families deserve better. Without these critical federal resources, more children will be exposed to lead, critical data and research will be lacking, and fewer will receive the testing and intervention they need. We urge lawmakers to act now before irreversible harm is done.”

In just one example of how these devastating cuts will impact Pennsylvania communities, the City of Chester, which was recently awarded a \$500,000 grant to address lead issues in the community, has had that grant frozen leaving one of the poorest communities in Pennsylvania with one of the oldest housing stocks, without needed tools to address childhood lead poisoning.

Pennsylvania has one of the oldest housing stocks in the nation, with 70% of homes built before 1980—many containing lead-based paint on windows, walls, railings, and baseboards. When deteriorated, this paint creates toxic dust and chips that poison young children.

According to the [2022 Childhood Lead Surveillance Annual Report](#), 11,500 children under the age of six are poisoned by lead each year, yet only 20% of children in this age group are tested annually. These cuts will further limit crucial resources needed to prevent exposure, detect poisoning early, and support affected families.

“Gutting these programs is an attack on public health,” said Amanda Reddy, Executive Director of the National Center for Healthy Housing. “More children will be unjustly exposed to lead and other environmental hazards, with fewer resources to mitigate the harm. We urge public health leaders, lawmakers, and advocates to stand with us and demand that Congress reverse this dangerous decision.”

The Lead-Free Promise Project (LFPP) launched its nearly 80-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

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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.