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**INCREASE IN CHILDREN REPORTED LEAD POISONED IN 2013; TESTING UP;
NEW CONCERNS FOR CHILDREN WITH TEST RESULTS IN THE 5-9µg/dL RANGE**

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – The Monroe County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) has released the 2013 Blood Lead Testing Data. The number of children under the age of six tested in Monroe County who had blood lead levels of 10µg/dl (micrograms per deciliter) *increased slightly* from 182 in 2012 to 197 last year.

The 2013 reports differs from previous reports in two ways. Dr. Stanley Schaffer, a Coalition board member, pediatrician at Strong Pediatrics, and Co-Director of the Rochester Office of the WNY Lead Resource Center said, "For the first time, the Monroe County Department of Public Health has broken out the number of children with blood lead levels of 5-9µg/dL." Dr. Schaffer continued, "This is particularly useful now that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has replaced what it had previously called the 'level of concern' (10µg/dL) with a new reference level of 5µg/dL. Although no amount of lead in the body is normal, *blood lead levels of 5 µg/dL or higher are now considered 'elevated.'*"

In this year's report, the term 'High Risk Zip Codes' has been replaced with the more accurate 'City and Combined City/Suburban Zip Codes.' In previous years, the annual blood lead testing report divided the results into 'Total County' results and 'High Risk' areas. 'High Risk' had been defined as all Rochester city zip codes as well as zip codes that were partially situated within the City of Rochester. Unfortunately, this falsely implied that all areas of the city and all bordering zip code areas extending into the city were high-risk areas.

The total number of children in Monroe County who were tested in 2013 rose by 344 in comparison to the previous year. The increase was seen entirely among children residing within the City of Rochester (or in zip codes that overlap the city and an adjacent suburb). Slightly more children having blood lead levels of 10µg/dL or higher (197) countywide were identified in 2013 than in 2012 (182). While the percentage of children with blood lead levels of 10µg/dL or higher rose slightly from 1.37% to 1.45% countywide, this rise was not statistically significant and means that the percentage of children considered lead poisoned remained essentially flat. Similarly, among

children living in city and combined city/suburban zip codes, there was a slight rise in the number and percentage of children with blood lead levels of 10µg/dL or higher.

Mel Callan, a family nurse practitioner at Highland Family Medicine and co-chair of the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning **said**, "The 2013 blood lead testing data again confirms that lead poisoning is not just a problem affecting children living **within the City of Rochester.**" **Callan continued**, "Seventy-three children living outside of the city (or in combined city/suburban zip codes) had blood lead levels of 5-9µg/dL. When added to the 23 children from the same suburban zip codes who were identified as having blood lead levels of 10µg/dL or higher, this means that *96 suburban Monroe County children (1.5% of those tested) had elevated blood lead levels.* Among children living in the city or in combined city/suburban zip codes, *790 children (11.1%) had elevated blood lead levels of 5µg/dL or higher.* This percentage is **way too high!**"

Since the CDC made the recommendation to lower the **intervention level from 10µg/dL to 5µg/dL** in 2012, our community partners have been proactively preparing for the news of the children poisoned with blood lead levels in the **5-9µg/dL range and have made significant policy changes.**

1. Last spring the City of Rochester amended the Lead Ordinance to expand inspections in at-risk housing.
2. The Monroe County Department of Public Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program has expanded its environmental investigation program.
3. To increase testing in underserved areas, the Monroe County Department of Public Health recently awarded two Lead Care II machines to the Orchard Street Community Health Center adjacent to School #17 and Jefferson Family Medicine on Jefferson Ave.—pediatric practices in high risk neighborhoods that do not have labs nearby.
4. The Coalition now has Lead Paint Poisoning Prevention brochures available in seven languages that are free to whoever requests them. PDFs of all brochures may be downloaded at www.letsmakeleadhistory.org.

Information on getting your home and children tested for lead hazards, how to get EPA Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) certified in accordance with federal law, and to request FREE educational materials in multiple languages can be found at the Coalition web site www.letsmakeleadhistory.org or by calling (585) 224-3125.

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Blood Lead Screening Data 2001-2013 (Children <= 6.00 years at time of screen)

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
Total County													
# Screened	13,259	13,537	13,708	13,746	13,624	14,561	14,917	14,114	13,778	12,447	14,055	13,263	13,607
% Screened 5-9 µg/dl													5.06%
# Screened >= 10 µg/dl	1,179	1,234	1,019	900	675	571	426	363	283	290	222	182	197
% Screened >= 10 µg/dl	8.9%	9.1%	7.4%	6.50%	4.95%	3.92%	2.86%	2.57%	2.05%	2.33%	1.58%	1.37%	1.45%
# with confirmatory lead levels >=15 µg/dl													32
% confirmed >= 15 µg/dl													0.24%
# with confirmatory lead levels >=20 µg/dl	89	112	83	57	47	49	29	32	30	13	19	18	15
% confirmed >= 20 µg/dl	0.67%	0.83%	0.61%	0.41%	0.34%	0.34%	0.19%	0.23%	0.22%	0.10%	0.14%	0.14%	0.11%
Children Screened with No Address	889	400	288	92	35	63	82	156	103	69	76	44	44
Percent of Children with No Address	6.70%	2.95%	2.10%	0.67%	0.24%	0.42%	0.58%	1.13%	0.83%	0.49%	0.57%	0.32%	0.32%
City and Combined City/Suburban Zip Codes*													
# Screened	8,137	8,682	8,805	8,469	8,226	9,206	8,533	8,369	7,780	7,327	7,400	6,757	7,112
% of total screens	61.37%	64.14%	64.23%	61.61%	60.38%	63.22%	57.20%	59.30%	56.47%	58.87%	52.65%	50.95%	52.27%
# Screened 5-9 µg/dl													616
% Screened 5-9 µg/dl													8.66%
# Screened >= 10 µg/dl	1,096	1,136	950	843	621	553	390	322	249	268	185	158	174
% Screened >= 10 µg/dl	13.5%	13.1%	10.8%	9.95%	7.55%	6.07%	4.57%	3.85%	3.20%	3.66%	2.50%	2.34%	2.45%
# with confirmatory lead levels >= 15 µg/dl													31
% confirmed >= 15 µg/dl													0.44%
# with confirmatory lead levels >= 20 µg/dl	87	104	76	55	45	46	26	31	27	13	18	17	14
% confirmed >= 20 µg/dl	1.07%	1.20%	0.86%	0.65%	0.55%	0.32%	0.30%	0.37%	0.35%	0.18%	0.24%	0.25%	0.20%
City and Combined City/Suburban Zip Codes*													
# Screened who are 1 & 2 yr olds	4,701	5,155	5,155	5,050	5,048	5,235	5,104	5,252	5,462	5,131	5,507	5,072	5,322
% Screened who are 1 & 2 yr olds	57.8%	59.4%	58.5%	59.60%	61.37%	56.87%	59.81%	62.76%	70.20%	70.00%	74.42%	75.06%	74.83%

* City and Combined City/Suburban Zip Codes (formerly labeled as High Risk) = 14604, 14605, 14606, 14607, 14608, 14609, 14610, 14611, 14612, 14613, 14614, 14615, 14619, 14620, 14621

An Interpretation of the 2013 Monroe County Blood Lead Testing Data

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WNY Lead Poisoning Resource Center – Rochester Office
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Chair, CPLP Screening and Professional Education Committee

The 2013 Monroe County Childhood Lead Testing report differs somewhat from the previous annual testing reports in 2 ways:

- 1. For the first time, MCDPH has broken out the number of children with blood lead levels of 5-9 µg/dL.**
 - a. This is particularly useful now that the CDC has replaced what it had previously called the 'blood lead level of concern' (10 µg/dL) with a new reference blood lead level which is 5 µg/dL. Although no amount of lead in the body is normal, *blood lead levels of 5 µg/dL or higher are now considered "elevated."*
 - b. Note, however, that many of the children with blood lead levels of 5-9 µg/dL had *fingerstick* lead levels that were *not confirmed with venous blood specimens*, so there may be a small amount of inaccuracy in these numbers since fingerstick lead levels may occasionally be falsely elevated.
- 2. In this year's report, the terminology 'High Risk' has been replaced with the more accurate 'City and Combined City/Suburban Zip Codes.'**
 - a. In previous years, the annual blood lead testing report divided the results into 'Total County' results and 'High Risk' areas. 'High risk' had been defined as all Rochester city zip codes as well as zip codes that were partially situated within the City of Rochester. Unfortunately, this falsely implied that all areas of the city and all bordering zip code areas extending into the city were high-risk areas.

What are the important take home points from the 2013 Monroe County blood lead testing numbers and how do the 2013 numbers compare to previous years' testing results?

- 1. The total number of children in Monroe County who were tested rose by 344 in 2013 compared to 2012 (a 2.5% increase).**
- 2. The increase was entirely seen among children residing within the City of Rochester or in zip codes that overlap the city and an adjacent suburb.**
- 3. Slightly more children having blood lead levels of 10 µg/dL or higher (197) countywide were identified in 2013 than in 2012 (182).**
 - a. While the percentage of children with blood lead levels ≥ 10 µg/dL rose slightly from 1.37% to 1.45% countywide, this rise was not statistically significant and means that the percentage of children with blood lead levels of 10 µg/dL or higher remained essentially flat.
 - b. Similarly, among children living in city and combined city/suburban zip codes, there was a slight rise in the number and percentage of children with blood lead levels of 10 µg/dL or higher.
 - c. Nevertheless, when one looks at trends over a period of several years, fewer and fewer children are being identified as having blood lead levels this high.

4. **The 2013 blood lead testing numbers again confirm that lead poisoning is not just a problem affecting children living within the City of Rochester.**
 - a. 73 children living outside of city or in combined city/suburban zip code areas had blood lead levels of 5-9 µg/dL (above the CDC's reference level). When combined with the 23 children from the same suburban zip codes who were identified as having blood lead levels of 10 µg/dL or higher, means that **96 suburban Monroe County children (1.5% of those tested) had elevated blood lead levels.**
 - b. Among children living in the city or in combined city/suburban zip codes, 790 children (11.1%) had elevated blood lead levels of 5 µg/dL or higher. This percentage is still way too high.

5. **As increasing numbers of children are tested for lead, one would expect more children with elevated blood lead levels to be identified.**
 - a. It is very important for all young children to be tested for lead, particularly at ages 1 and again at 2.
 - b. NY State law requires that all children in the state have a blood test for lead.
 - c. It is also important for children living in older housing to be tested at or around 18 months of age since this is when hand-mouth behavior is greatest and this corresponds to a time when children's brains are developing quickly and are potentially most affected by lead.
 - d. ***The only way to identify children with lead exposure is to test them with a blood test.***

6. **The number of children both countywide and in city and combined city/suburban zip codes who were newly identified as having blood lead levels of 15 µg/dL or higher and 20 µg/dL or higher dropped from 2012 to 2013 despite the increased number of children being tested for lead.**
 - a. This trend indicates that our communitywide efforts at primary prevention are paying off.