



MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN



Contact Information:

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
Carolyn Human (716) 713-3472
carolyn@carolynhuman.com

COMMUNITY PARTNERS RELEASE LEAD ACTION PLAN, SHARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE THREAT OF LEAD POISONING IN BUFFALO AND ERIE COUNTY

Buffalo, N.Y. – The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo is pleased to join with the City of Buffalo, Erie County and our other dedicated partners to share a first-of-its-kind lead action plan with the community.

Recognizing that lead poisoning permanently reduces a child’s ability to learn and is preventable, the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) was commissioned to evaluate comprehensive lead poisoning data and conduct community interviews. The result is a report entitled: *Renewing Our Pledge: A Path to Ending Lead Poisoning of Buffalo’s Most Vulnerable Citizens.*

“For the first time, this report combines City of Buffalo housing data with Erie County health data to provide a clear picture of the location and type of housing that pose a serious threat to children living in Buffalo,” said Kent Gardner, Ph.D., Project Director at Center for Governmental Research, “As researchers, we are impressed by the commitment and sense of urgency among a group of community partners to address lead poisoning issues head-on.”

Key findings of the report include:

- Erie County has one of the highest blood lead testing rates in New York State with 61% of children born in 2012 tested twice by age 36 months.
- Lead poisoning rates in Erie County have plateaued in recent years.
- The majority of children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels (EBLLs) live in City of Buffalo single family homes and doubles owned by over 1,200 different property owners.
- Over 80% of the properties where children are lead poisoned are rental properties.

The report details more than a dozen recommendations about how to address this critical issue in our community.

--- MORE ---

Here are a few of the recommendations:

- Require owners of all rental housing to pass an interior inspection for deteriorated (e.g., peeling and flaking) paint every three years after an initial six year phase-in period for singles and doubles. The City will issue certificates of compliance which must be posted in rental units.
- Require Certificates of Occupancy for all residential housing at the point of sale.
- Increase the financial resources for lead remediation through an expanded menu of public and private grants, low-interest loans, and financing to ensure property owners have access to capital to make all properties lead safe.
- New York State should grant school nurses across the state access to children's blood lead test results in the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS) to allow students to be appropriately evaluated for beneficial educational services.

To ensure the recommendations are closely reviewed and action is taken, a Lead Safe Task force will be created in the coming weeks that will include a cross-section of community leaders and members that can steer the implementation of the recommendations.

"This groundbreaking lead action plan provides our community with a clear path to eliminate lead poisoning and provide children with the opportunity to live in healthy homes that will position them for success," said Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker, President/CEO, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. "I commend our partners, especially the City and County, for their continued commitment to aggressively addressing this issue together."

"This report recognizes that Buffalo has been a leader in the fight against lead poisoning and that many of the practices my Administration has employed to detect and reduce lead exposure should be adopted by the state and other municipalities," Mayor Brown said. "We will examine the new policies outlined in the group's recommendations, and in cooperation with our County and non-profit partners, take the additional and necessary steps to protect our children from the dangers of lead."

"The Lead Action Plan provides a concrete framework for taking our fight against lead to the next level. The Plan provides a template for enhanced primary prevention efforts to keep kids from becoming lead poisoned in the first place. There are many components to the Plan, and while we have made progress in the fight against lead there is more work to do. Our region's housing stock creates unique challenges in the fight against lead poisoning, and I believe the steps laid out in the Lead Action plan will go a long way towards tackling those challenges," said Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz.

The study was funded by the City of Buffalo and early childhood funders including the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York, The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, The John R. Oishei Foundation and the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County. This assessment was advised by the WNY Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning and data support was provided by the Erie County Department of Health. The Partnership for Public Good also assisted with community engagement.

The report in its entirety can be viewed at www.cfgb.org/lead-action-plan.