



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Melaney Arnold – 217-558-0500

melaney.arnold@illinois.gov

Illinois Department Of Public Health Lead Rules Approved

SPRINGFIELD – Rules proposed by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) that will increase the number of children identified with lead poisoning and trigger earlier intervention were approved by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) today. The rules lower the level at which public health interventions are initiated for children with blood lead levels from 10 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) to 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, the same lead reference level used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“The new lower action level means more children will be identified as having lead poisoning, allowing parents, doctors, public health officials, and communities to take action earlier to reduce the child’s future exposure to lead,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “Even low levels of lead in blood have been shown to contribute to learning disabilities, developmental delays, behavioral problems, as well as a number of other negative health effects.”

With the new rules, children who test at or above the new intervention level of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ will receive a home visit from a public health nurse who will educate families on ways to lower the blood lead level and reduce lead exposure, including proper nutrition, hygiene, and housekeeping. Public health environmental experts will also begin to inspect residences for all children with an elevated blood lead level of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ or greater to determine the potential source(s) of the child’s lead exposure as additional resources become available.

The burden of Illinois childhood lead poisoning remains one of the highest in the nation. Among the approximately 229,000 children tested in 2017, more than 7,000 had blood lead levels at or above 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$.

Illinois law requires that all children six years of age or younger be assessed for lead risk. Physicians must perform a blood lead test for children who live in [high-risk areas](#) or meet other risk criteria.

In addition to lowering the blood lead level at which health departments will conduct an environmental inspection and case management, the rules reduce other lead environmental benchmarks including lead in dust and water.

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The rules also propose increased enforcement authority for violations of the Lead Poisoning Prevention Act and Code. This includes property owners who fail to perform lead remediation on a property where children with elevated blood levels live. Additionally, the proposed rules increase the maximum fine for violators to encourage compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rules and impose penalties for returned checks or insufficient payments. This rulemaking also establishes the safest way for lead to be removed from homes and ensures that workers engaged in this work are appropriately remediating lead hazards and are not creating additional risk to residents.

The rules will become effective in the coming weeks and will be available in the Illinois Register on the Illinois Secretary of State [website](#).

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