



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

News Release

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City of San Diego Program Sets Goal of Eliminating Lead Poisoning in San Diego
San Diego Ranks Fourth in California for Number of Residences at High Risk for Lead Hazards

SAN DIEGO, CA— Today the City of San Diego launched a citywide lead poisoning prevention public awareness campaign called “Lead-Out San Diego” (LOSD) during a press conference held at the Bayside Community Center in Linda Vista. City of San Diego District 6 Council Member Donna Frye announced this component of the “Lead Safe Neighborhoods Program” (LSNP), designed by the City’s Environmental Services Department, and gave lead awareness presentations to local children who visit the Center after school hours.

“The City is committed to eliminating incidences of lead poisoning in San Diego and our Lead Safe Neighborhoods Program will help us create a path to reach this goal,” said Council Member Donna Frye. “Helping residents understand the danger of lead exposure to our children and the source of the lead is the key to reducing and eventually stopping incidents of lead poisoning in our communities. In addition to the Lead-Out San Diego grant program, that educates our community members, the City of San Diego began enforcement on October 1, 2003 that makes it unlawful for people to create or maintain lead hazards in their homes or properties.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), childhood lead poisoning is the number one preventable environmental health problem facing our children today. Lead poisoning in children can cause adverse effects on development such as permanent damage to a child’s nervous system, IQ loss, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and at very high levels coma, convulsions and death. The primary sources of lead exposure for children are deteriorating lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust and lead in residential soil.

Currently in San Diego and across the nation, the largest source of childhood lead poisoning is from lead-based paints that were commonly used on homes constructed pre-1978. As homes age, if the paint is not maintained and begins to flake or is disturbed from remodeling or construction, the paint can be released into the dust and soil of the home.

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Across the nation, minority and low-income children are disproportionately affected by lead poisoning since they are more likely to live in pre-1978 housing containing lead-based paint. San Diego County ranks fourth in California for the number residences at high risk for lead hazards. More than one-third of the residences in the County that are considered high risk are located in the City of San Diego's Council Districts 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8. The typical structures in these areas were constructed approximately 40 to 60 years ago, when using lead-based paint was a standard and common practice.

“According to the San Diego County's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, from 1992 through 2002 there were 780 reported cases of children with elevated blood lead levels in the County and 86 percent of these are Latino children and 42 percent are children from the City's designated high-risk areas,” said Chris Gonaver, chief deputy director, Environmental Services Department. “Because of the low number of children that are actually tested, the number of children actually lead poisoned may be much higher. Our Lead Safe Neighborhoods Program focuses on various methods of prevention, before our children are poisoned.”

The LSNP features six main components: public education, inspections and assessments, early intervention, enforcement, community resource for lead information and networking to connect other lead poisoning prevention organizations in San Diego. In addition, the City has a Lead Poison Prevention Citizen's Advisory Taskforce that is co-chaired by City Council Members Donna Frye, District 6, and Ralph Inzunza, District 8. The Taskforce's members work with the LSNP staff and are currently developing a comprehensive lead-related ordinance in the City.

Lead-Out San Diego is a \$478,000 grant funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide public education and lead-hazard awareness. LOSD builds strategic partners between the City and two local community-based organizations, La Maestra Community Health Centers and the Bayside Community Center. These two community-based organizations will perform lead hazard education and outreach to the community members they serve in specific target areas.

In addition, the LOSD public education component will include free or low-cost trainings on lead hazards and lead-safe work practices for outreach workers, property managers, childcare providers, residents, landlords, and workers in the construction industry. Equipment and tools used in the control of lead hazards in the home will also be made available to residents at no cost.

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The LSNP's staff will also provide free lead-hazard inspections and assessments to low-income residents in high-risk areas throughout the city and to any family that has a child with blood lead levels of 5 ug/dL or higher but is not eligible for assistance from the County's Childhood Lead Poison Prevention Program (CLPPP). In partnership with CLPPP's Early Intervention Program, the City will provide environmental investigative services when a child has been poisoned with a blood lead level between 9.5 and 14.5 ug/dL.

According to City of San Diego Municipal Code section 54.1001, it is illegal to create or maintain lead hazards, which includes deteriorated lead-based paint found in many San Diego homes. To enforce this Municipal Code, the LSNP's staff has partnered with the City Neighborhood Code Compliance and Development Services Departments to perform enforcement of lead hazards that create substandard housing conditions and lead hazards generated by deferred maintenance or by improper work practices that disturb lead-based paint. In addition to the program's hands-on enforcement practices, a State of California grant was recently awarded to the LSNP program to function as the Regional Lead Compliance and Enforcement Coordinator for the entire County of San Diego.

The LSNP will also make resources available to all San Diegans and serve as the agency to connect all available lead poisoning prevention resources to the community. Through becoming a resource, the LSNP staff will help ensure various options for lead related safety programs exist for all residents, independent of the eligibility criteria that is required by other local lead programs.

“No child should suffer from lead poisoning,” said Frye. “Our children are our future and we can't afford to carelessly risk their lives especially when we can prevent it. Through our Lead Safe Neighborhoods Program, I believe we have a chance to make a difference and stop incidences of lead poisoning in San Diego.”

Residents who live in pre-1978 homes that have deteriorated paint or who suspect lead contaminated dust or soil exist in their homes should call ESD at (858) 694-7000. Representative from LSNP will provide information on lead and in many cases for eligible residents, provide free inspections and lead abatement work. For more information on the LSNP training programs or general information, please visit the web site at <http://www.sandiego/environmental-services/>.