

MEDIA RELEASE

Information **Advisory** **Warning** **Update**

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The St. Clair County Health Department Promotes Lead Awareness and Prevention Strategies

The St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) is working with Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in a joint effort to keep residents informed about the increasing levels of lead (Pb) observed at the air monitoring data station near Mueller Brass. Though the levels remain in compliance with national air quality standards and MDEQ has been working with Mueller Brass on resolutions, the Health Department is reminding residents about lead awareness and prevention strategies.

MDHHS is currently conducting a data review of blood levels reported among residents living in communities surrounding Mueller Brass. In addition, the department (MDHHS) is collaborating with MDEQ to develop a soil sampling plan for adjacent properties to determine lead levels.

Dr. Annette Mercatante, Medical Health Officer stated, "We are currently working to determine next steps related to potential exposures, including testing and educational needs once all of the information is gathered. Our job in public health is to ensure the health and safety of our residents. At this time we do not know if people in the area have been exposed to increased lead, and want to remind everyone that the greatest risk of lead exposure continues to be from lead based paint in older homes. As a precautionary measure however, the Health Department will be conducting community lead educational meetings and offering blood lead testing for all pregnant women and children under six years of age living in the 48060 zip code. Dates and locations will be announced in the near future."

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), no safe blood level in children has been identified. Lead

...continued on page 2...

exposure can affect nearly every system in the body. Because lead exposure often occurs with no obvious symptoms, it frequently goes unrecognized. The only way to detect lead poisoning is by performing a simple blood test. Most children do not show symptoms of lead poisoning. Current lead testing recommendations state that all children under the age of six should have their blood lead levels tested. This can be done at their doctor's office or the health department.

Since treatment options are limited, prevent lead poisoning by:

- Washing your and your children's hands regularly especially before eating and sleeping
- Eating nutritious foods with high iron, calcium and vitamin C contents
- Not wearing shoes inside your home
- Mopping floors regularly
- Cleaning children's toys
- Buying lead free blinds
- Avoiding having pregnant women and children stay in homes when remodeling is occurring

Stay tuned for further updates. For more information call (810) 987-5300, visit our website www.scchealth.co or follow us on social media @scchdmi.

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