

NAHP Update

Getting the Lead Out

Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning

BY JENNIFER JONES

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Children exposed to lead paint can experience brain damage, slowed growth, learning and behavioral problems, and hearing and speech problems. All of which can result in a lower IQ, decreased ability to pay attention and underperformance in school. Children can be exposed to lead through peeling and deteriorating lead-based paint, contaminated soil, toys, candies imported from other countries, water pipes and lead-based product dust brought into the home by unsuspecting parents.

Lead-based paints were banned for use in housing in 1978; however, all housing built before the ban likely contains some lead-based paint. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 24 million homes in the U.S. contain deteriorated lead-based paint and elevated levels of lead-contaminated house dust. Additionally, 535,000 U.S. children ages 1-5 have blood lead levels high enough to damage their health, according to the CDC. And, while lead poisoning is irreversible, it is completely preventable.



HUD'S RESPONSE

To help prevent the life-long effects of lead poisoning, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has created the Lead-Safe Homes, Lead-Free Kids Toolkit.

The toolkit aims to:

- Strengthen the regulatory

framework and monitoring by proposing revisions to HUD's Lead Safe Housing Rule, which, when issued, will align the child blood lead level requiring response with the CDC's recommended level.

- Identify and address known lead hazards through increased



NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (NAHMA)—Protecting the Interests of Affordable Housing Property Managers and Owners



monitoring, improved local reporting and guidance by increasing monitoring and enforcement of the Lead Safe Housing Rule and the Lead Disclosure Rule, as well as

- Work with administration partners to encourage an interagency focus on addressing lead hazard prevention for both paint and other sources.
- Provide education and target-

in HUD-assisted homes.

- Conduct research to identify best practices and determine where to target federal resources by studying the effectiveness of HUD grantees' use of grants to address lead issues.

Other key features of the toolkit include efforts to improve the process to identify and control lead hazards before children are sickened and strengthen monitoring of HUD-assisted housing. The toolkit also builds on HUD's work by facilitating partnerships among HUD and other federal agencies to develop a consistent standard for and response to water quality issues in HUD-assisted housing.

In addition, HUD announced that more than \$52.6 million in Lead Based Paint Hazard Control grants were awarded to 23 local and state government agencies in July. With these grants, HUD seeks to address health hazards in more than 2,800 low-income homes with significant lead and other home health and safety hazards.

HUD's key federal partners share an extensive history of work to prevent lead exposure. For nearly 30 years, the CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program has developed programs and policies to prevent childhood lead poisoning and provided funding to state and local health departments to determine the extent of

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clarifying HUD guidance about these rules to public housing agencies, owners of HUD-assisted housing and HUD grantees.

ed outreach to increase awareness of lead and work with health departments to make available blood lead level testing to all children under age 6

PRESIDENT

Ken Pagano, CPM, SCHM, NAHP-e
jkpagano@essexplazamgmt.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kris Cook, CAE
kris.cook@nahma.org

COORDINATOR, TRAINING, EDUCATION & SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Natasha Patterson
npatterson@nahma.org

DIRECTOR, MEMBERSHIP

Brenda Moser
brenda.moser@nahma.org

EDITOR

Jennifer Jones
jjones@nahma.org

DESIGN

Mary Butler
butler5s@comcast.net

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childhood lead poisoning. Since its inception, the CDC has funded nearly 60 childhood lead poisoning prevention programs to develop, implement and evaluate lead poisoning prevention activities.

Visit HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes webpage, www.hud.gov/healthyhomes, for more information on grants as well as information on other hazards including

radon and carbon monoxide, among others.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

There are several ways to reduce the risk of lead poisoning. One of the most important things is to determine when your housing—or any building where children spend a lot of time—was constructed. The CDC recommends that paint in any building built before 1978 be

treated as if it was lead-based unless tests have proven otherwise. The local or state health department can assist in testing resources.

In the meantime, ensure children do not have access to peeling or chewable surfaces painted with lead-based paint. Wash children's hands and toys regularly, both could be contaminated from soil or household dust. Wet mop floors and wet wipe horizontal surfaces every two to three weeks to prevent containment build up. Take off shoes before entering the house and leave them outside so as not to bring contaminants inside. Do not let children play in bare soil. Instead, plant grass or, if possible, create a sandbox and cover it when not in use.

If a house or building built before the lead-paint ban is undergoing renovation, children and pregnant women should avoid the area until the renovations are complete. Additionally, create barriers between living and playing areas and the lead sources by closing and locking doors, using temporary barriers such as contact paper or duct tape and covering holes in walls.

Visit the CDC's lead webpage, www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead, for more information, including helpful tips, available programs, statistics and more. **NU**

Jennifer Jones is manager of communications and public relations for NAHMA.

Creating a Uniform Standard For Physical Inspections

The Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) has created a slideshow to help better explain the Uniform Physical Condition Standards Deficiencies and Industry Standard Repairs for all inspections that went into effect Aug. 1. The standards were included in a July 11 notice.

The presentation provides clarification and guidance concerning industry standards and it was used to train REAC inspectors in July. It includes photo examples of acceptable repairs and unacceptable deficiencies relating to site erosion, downspouts, drywall repairs, cracks in brick walls and other inspection items.

The need for clarification of the inspection procedures arose after Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) quality assurance inspectors noticed a growing trend of non-industry standard repairs in preparation for a REAC inspection at some properties. HUD theorized the “trend may be the result of decisions to embrace the practice of minimal inferior repairs in order to pass the REAC inspection. Such a practice eventually leads to diminished living conditions because of repairs that do not meet the “Industry Standard” for being a reasonable and/or an appropri-



ate repair (e.g., plywood covering a hole in a drywall wall or ceiling).”

HUD said all repairs should be made in “a good and workmanlike manner” with materials that are suitable for the purpose and free from defects. The notice defined good and workmanlike as ensuring the component, as repaired, performs its intended function, and finishing the repair in a manner that is reasonably compatible with the design and quality of the original or adjoining materials.

The notice said a deficiency is recorded for each standard repair. Property representatives can use the Technical Review/Database Adjustment process to appeal any recorded deficiencies.

According to the notice, the following are some exam-

ples of typical items that are often incorrectly repaired:

■ **Cracks in Brick Wall.** Tuck-pointed using mortar is the correct means of repair; caulking is not appropriate.

■ **Drywall Repair.** Sheetrock with mud and/or tape is the correct means of repair. Simply covering hole or damaged drywall with plywood/laminate is not correct.

■ **Wooden Door Repair.** Wood or wood veneer is the correct material for repair. Sheetrock mud or plywood is not correct.

■ **Downspouts.** Same materials, shape and design are correct. Plastic or PVC piping may not be correct; clarifications were provided in the REAC training session.

■ **Erosion.** Correcting the root cause of the erosion is the correct means of repair; for exam-

ple, correct or repair the drainage or add fill-soil. Simply hiding or covering the erosion with mulch or straw is not correct.

■ **Electrical Panels.** Installing a correct panel cover or using manufactured blanks is the correct means of repair. Using caulking or expandable spray foam to fill gaps is not correct.

■ **Refrigerator Gasket.** Replacing the gasket is the correct means of repair. Using white electrical tape, fingernail polish, white-out, etc., is not correct, except for very minor repairs (1 inch or less).

■ **Stick to Hold up a Window.** Repairing or replacing the original lock is the correct means of repair. Placing a stick in the window as the primary means of securing a window or sliding door is not correct. **NU**



To view the slideshow, visit the HUD Issues webpage under the Agencies tab at www.nahma.org.

Making High-Speed Connections at Home

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) ConnectHome initiative has teamed up with Comcast so that public housing and HUD-assisted residents living in the cable company's service area are eligible to apply for Internet Essentials, the company's high-speed internet adoption program for low-income families. Under the program, an estimated total of up to 2 million HUD-assisted homes, including public housing, Housing Choice Voucher and Multifamily programs, will have access to low-cost internet service.

"This is the single largest expansion of the Internet Essentials program in its history, and we're thrilled to be working with HUD to help connect even more families, including seniors, veterans and adults without children, to the transformative power of having internet service at home," said David L. Cohen, senior executive vice president and chief diversity officer

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For more information about Internet Essentials or to apply for the program, visit www.InternetEssentials.com or call 1-855-846-8376. Spanish speakers should call 1-855-765-6995.

For more information about the ConnectHome initiative, visit <http://connecthome.hud.gov> or call 202-708-1112.

of Comcast, in a July press release.

Internet Essentials provides low-cost high-speed internet service for \$9.95 a month plus tax; the option to purchase an internet-ready computer for under \$150; and multiple options to access free digital literacy training in print, online and in-person.

"ConnectHome is opening doors of opportunity for our next generation of Americans," said HUD Secretary, Julián Castro, in the release. "[This] announcement has the potential to transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of kids across the nation by giving them the tools to reach their full potential. We're grateful to Comcast for joining the ConnectHome initiative, which has extended its reach to more than 1.5 million children in one short year."

Between 2009 and 2014, broadband service providers spent more than \$422 billion on capital investments, yet one in four American households still do not access the internet at home, particularly lower-income families with children, according to HUD. ConnectHome's goal is to ensure students can access the same level of high-speed internet at home that they have in their classrooms.

This is the ninth time in five years Comcast has expanded eligibility for

Internet Essentials. The policy change marks the first time households without children that are eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are able to apply for Internet Essentials.

Additionally, Comcast has expanded the number of schools where every student will be deemed eligible for the program so long as a certain percentage of the children in that school are NSLP eligible. As a result, Comcast estimates automatic enrollment now applies to about half of the 48,000 schools across its service area.

From August 2011 through December 2015, Internet Essentials has connected more than 600,000 low-income families, benefiting more than 2.4 million Americans, to the internet at home. Also during that time, Comcast has invested more than \$280 million in cash and in-kind support to help fund digital literacy training and education initiatives, reaching nearly 4.4 million people through national and local nonprofit community partners.

Through ConnectHome, internet service providers, nonprofits and the private sector are offering broadband access, technical training, digital literacy programs and devices for residents in assisted housing units in 28 pilot communities across the nation. **NU**

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Providing a Valuable Service To People Who Need It Most

NAME: Mark Knueppel, NAHP-e, CPM

MANAGEMENT COMPANY: Metropolitan Associates

POSITION: Vice President of Property Management for Government Housing

Ask 10 property managers how they got involved in the industry and you will most likely hear 10 variations of the “I fell into it” story. Not Mark Knueppel. He actually chose a career in property management from the start, earning real estate and property management degrees in college. And in the course of his 20 years with Milwaukee-based Metropolitan Associates, Knueppel has worked his way up from leasing apartments to vice president.

“After a few years of conventional housing, I was promoted to manage a property that had both conventional units and Section 8 elderly. I found it very rewarding and have been involved with managing Section 8 for the past 17 years,” he said.

Now, he is responsible for the management operations of more than 1,800 units in 12 different locations.

“So long as the opportunity is there for me, and I am able to work, I will be here. I chose this industry as much as it chose me,” he said. “Metropolitan Associates is an excellent company to work for. They provide a quality product and truly care about their residents and employees. Almost all of my co-workers have worked here for 10 or more years and I believe that speaks for itself.”

Knueppel’s focus as vice president is maintaining the balance between providing good returns and protecting the investment of the owners while also providing good, quality affordable housing to those who need it. He said it is easy to do one or the other, but a good manager can do both.

For anyone considering a career in affordable housing, Knueppel said, “It is a great career choice. The thing that pushed me toward it is the realization that people will always need housing regardless of whatever the economic conditions are. There are not many industries like this. It is very rewarding being able to provide a service to people that really need it.”

He also recommends find-

ing a good company to work for and then talking to its residents and employees.

“As you work your way up in a company, you are only as good as the others around you. Surround yourself with good people and listen to their needs. Just know that if your property grounds do not look great, it is a reflection on everyone. If the leaky pipe does not get fixed, everyone looks bad. It takes a team of equally dedicated individuals to achieve greatness, and that is what I strive for each day,” he said.

Knueppel has been happily married for 11 years. In his off time, he likes being on the water and away from the city. However, he said, Sundays in the fall are reserved for rooting for the Packers. **NU**

PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPERTY MANAGERS AND OWNERS

National Affordable Housing Management Association
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www.nahma.org

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