

Program Factsheet

Recently the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lowered the blood lead reference level to 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$. At this level the CDC recommends public health actions be taken to eliminate the lead exposure in an affected child. However, no level of lead in the blood is safe as lead exposure can affect many systems in the body.

In the Fall of 2011, the Montana Department of Public Health and Humans Services received a grant from the CDC to address health hazards in the home. The Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program was established and designed a lead testing program for children enrolled in Medicaid who were between the ages of 1 and 5 years old. At the end of May 2012, 9 county health departments covering 11 total counties were funded to test children for lead. Below summarizes some of the preliminary findings of the program as of August 15, 2012.

- ❖ 336 home visits conducted for 484 children between the ages of 0 and 15 years
- ❖ 89% of children receiving a lead test were between the ages of 1-5 years
- ❖ 485 valid filter paper tests conducted (as of August 21, 2012)
- ❖ 102 children tested had a lead level of 1-4.9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ (21% of all tested)
- ❖ 13 children tested had a lead level over the reference level of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ (2.7% of all tested)
- ❖ Nearly 1 in 4 children tested had a detectable blood lead level
- ❖ 80% of children with a detectable lead level whose year their home was built was available lived in a home built before 1978. In 25% of home visits the parents indicated that the child regularly visits a home built before 1978.
- ❖ 28% of homes visited had evidence of peeling paint
- ❖ 16% of children receiving a home visit reported being exposed to tobacco smoke in the car and 11% reported exposure in the home

Location of lead testing activities, Montana, 2012

