

MARYLAND LEAD POISONING PREVENTION COMMISSION

January 4, 2021

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor of Maryland
Executive Department
State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

On behalf of the Maryland Lead Poisoning Prevention Commission (Commission), please accept this letter as the Commission's Annual Report for Calendar Year 2020, as required by Environment Article, § 6-810(c), *Annotated Code of Maryland*. The Commission's agendas and monthly minutes can be found at the following link:

mde.maryland.gov/programs/LAND/LeadPoisoningPrevention/Pages/LPPMeetingMinutes.aspx.

The Commission, established under Environment Article Title 6, Subtitle 8, advises the Department of the Environment, the Legislature, and the Governor regarding lead poisoning prevention in Maryland, and specifically the Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing Law. During 2020, the Commission considered and reviewed the following:

- A gap analysis prepared by the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative *pro bono* for the Commission. The Commission reviewed the assets, gaps and recommended actions specific to the following: (1) blood lead testing and screening; (2) lead case management; (3) environmental investigations; (4) enforcement; (5) grant and loans; and (6) outreach, education and training;
- Amended regulations for Laboratory Reporting, COMAR 26.02.01. The amendments were necessary to incorporate new reporting requirements for the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); to incorporate the new CDC Reference Level, and to make minor updates and clarifications;
- Amended regulations for Lead in Dust Standards, COMAR 26.02.07; 26.16.02; 26.16.05 (pp. 6-10). The amendments were necessary to bring Maryland more in-line with federal dust lead hazard standards, and are more protective of public health and more consistent with the concept of a lower blood lead reference level;
- New regulations established for Environmental Investigations performed in response to the new "Reference" blood lead level required under Ch. 341, Acts of 2019. The new regulations define procedures for performing an Environmental Investigation in response to a child identified at or above the new "reference" level of 5 micrograms per deciliter of blood. The regulations require the use of the guidelines established by the Department of Housing and Community Development, Guidelines for the Evaluation and Control of Lead-Based Hazards in Housing (2012 Edition) and will achieve consistency when an investigation is performed to identify sources of lead when a child is exposed.

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- The Annual Childhood Lead Surveillance Report, a comprehensive report on blood lead data and surveillance on all children tested for lead statewide. Laboratories are mandated to report all blood lead tests to the Maryland Department of the Environment's Childhood Lead Registry (CLR). The Annual Report contains; (1) a statistical report on all blood lead data within the prior calendar years; (2) medical and environmental outcomes and data for all children (0-6 years of age) identified with a first time blood lead level; (3) comparisons and trends in blood lead data; (4) analysis of demographic information reported to the CLR; and (5) trends and comparisons of data over time.
- Maryland Department of Health presented preliminary data from the Maryland Blood Lead Testing Initiative: Evaluation Report and Updated Models for Targeted Testing.
- Legislation established under Ch. 500, Acts of 2020, which altered the membership of the Commission to include one representative each from a nonprofit focused on lead poisoning prevention issues and the American Academy of Pediatrics, Maryland Chapter; repealed certain requirements for a window replacement program; and altered the subjects that the Commission may appoint a subcommittee to study to include case management, lead paint abatement service provider education and training, and blood lead testing; etc.
- Updates on the progress of lead poisoning prevention efforts by state¹ and local² agencies.
- Impacts of COVID-19 on testing rates statewide.

Based upon the Commission's study of these topics, the Commission took the following actions and made the following recommendations:

- After the review of a detailed gap analysis, the Commission created subcommittees and determined impactful actions for Maryland to consider to further reduce the incidence of childhood lead exposure. The main areas of focus included; (1) evaluating lead hazard reduction grant and loan resources; (2) environmental investigation and housing inspection; (3) enforcement; (4) blood lead testing and screening; (5) case management; and (6) outreach and education. The Commission determined which areas to focus on and established short term goals, mid terms goals and long term goals. The Commission will continue to work on these items in 2021.
- Provided input on the following regulatory changes, which were adopted effective July 1, 2020:
 - Amended regulations for Laboratory Reporting COMAR 26.02.01.
 - Amended regulations for Lead in Dust Standards, COMAR 26.02.07; 26.16.02; 26.16.05 (pp. 6-10).
 - New regulations established for Environmental Investigations performed in response to the new "Reference" blood lead level required under Ch. 341, Acts of 2019.

¹ Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Department of Education - Office of Child Care

² Baltimore City Health Department, Baltimore City Housing and Community Development, Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Baltimore County Health Department

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- Welcomed new members to the Commission, including Dr. Paul Rogers, representative of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Maryland Chapter, and Ruth Ann Norton, representative of the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, a nonprofit organization focused on lead poisoning prevention issues.

We appreciate the opportunity to update you on the Commission's work over the past year. We look forward to continuing our work in 2021 to further the Commission's vision of a Maryland in which all children are free from the harmful effects of lead exposure.

Sincerely,

Paula T. Montgomery

Paula T. Montgomery
MDE Representative
Lead Poisoning Prevention Commission