



FSSA News Release

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Indiana to establish new health services initiative for enhanced lead testing and abatement

INDIANAPOLIS—The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration has received federal authorization to use up to \$3 million annually over the next five years to establish a new health services initiative to provide lead testing, prevention and abatement services to low income Hoosiers.

The initiative will be funded through the CHIP program and provided by the Indiana State Department of Health's (ISDH) Lead & Healthy Homes Division to primarily support lead testing and abatement efforts in East Chicago, South Bend and other areas throughout the state identified as having a higher risk for lead exposure among children.

"We are pleased that our federal partners have approved this creative way to repurpose CHIP administrative funds to address crucial children's public health concerns," said Jennifer Walthall M.D., M.P.H., secretary of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. "Children need healthy communities and healthy homes to have the best chance at a successful future."

FSSA anticipates the funding will cover the cost of testing and abatement for hundreds of homes per year as well as educating families and equipping physicians with information about lead exposure. The funding will also cover retesting of the homes to ensure the effectiveness of the abatement work.

The new funding will supplement other federal, state and local efforts aimed at reducing the harmful effects of lead exposure on children. The initiative will serve families eligible to be covered by Medicaid or CHIP.

"Lead exposure can affect a child's overall development," said State Health Commissioner Kris Box, M.D, FACOG. "We hope that through this funding we can significantly increase our testing and abatement activities and provide hundreds of additional children a better path toward normal development."

Drs. Walthall and Box added they hope the program, along with continued efforts to raise awareness and education among families and primary care providers, will help ensure appropriate lead screening among children who are at risk for lead exposure.

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