

Childhood Lead Poisoning in Wisconsin

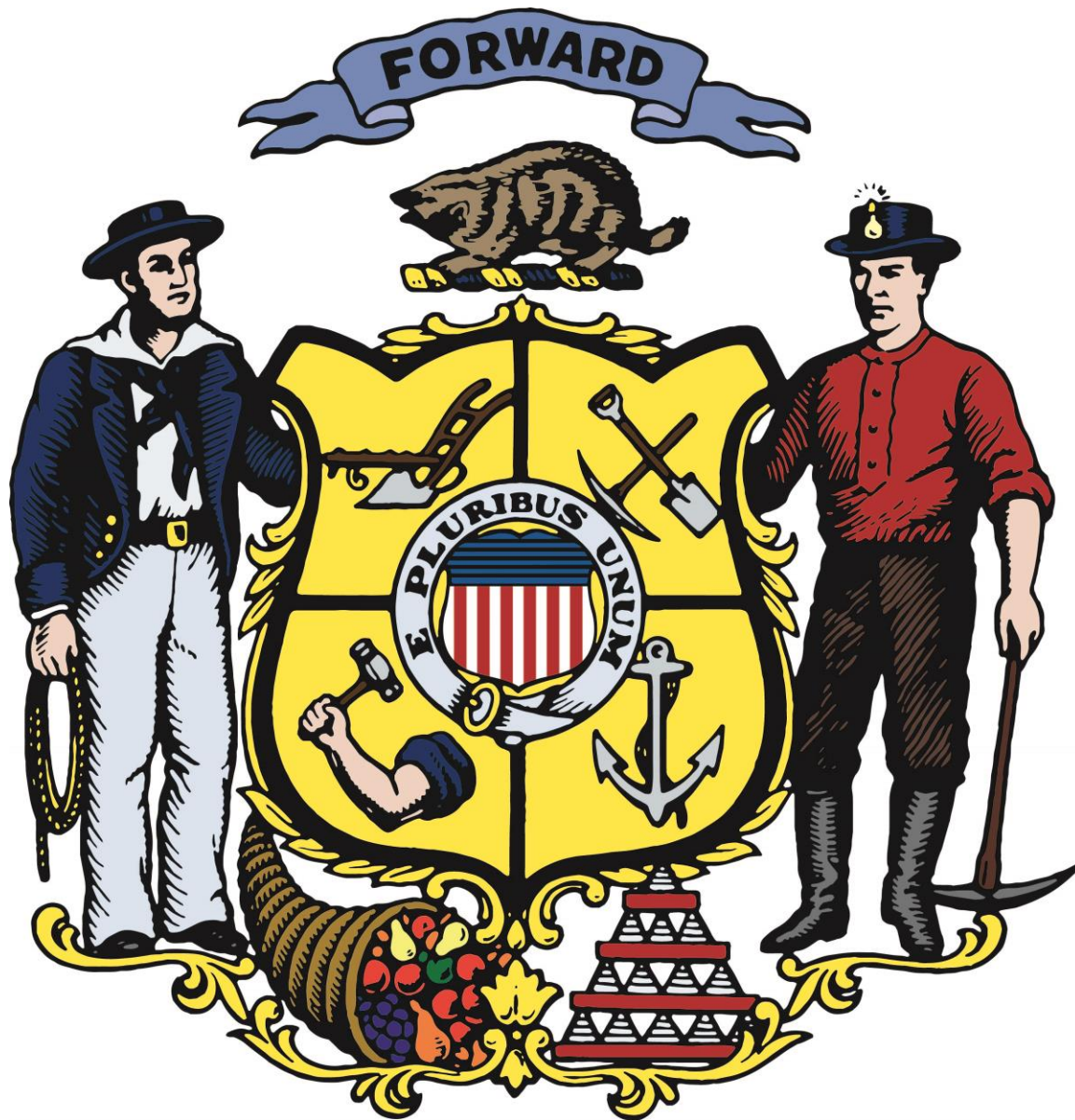
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Overview of Today's Discussion

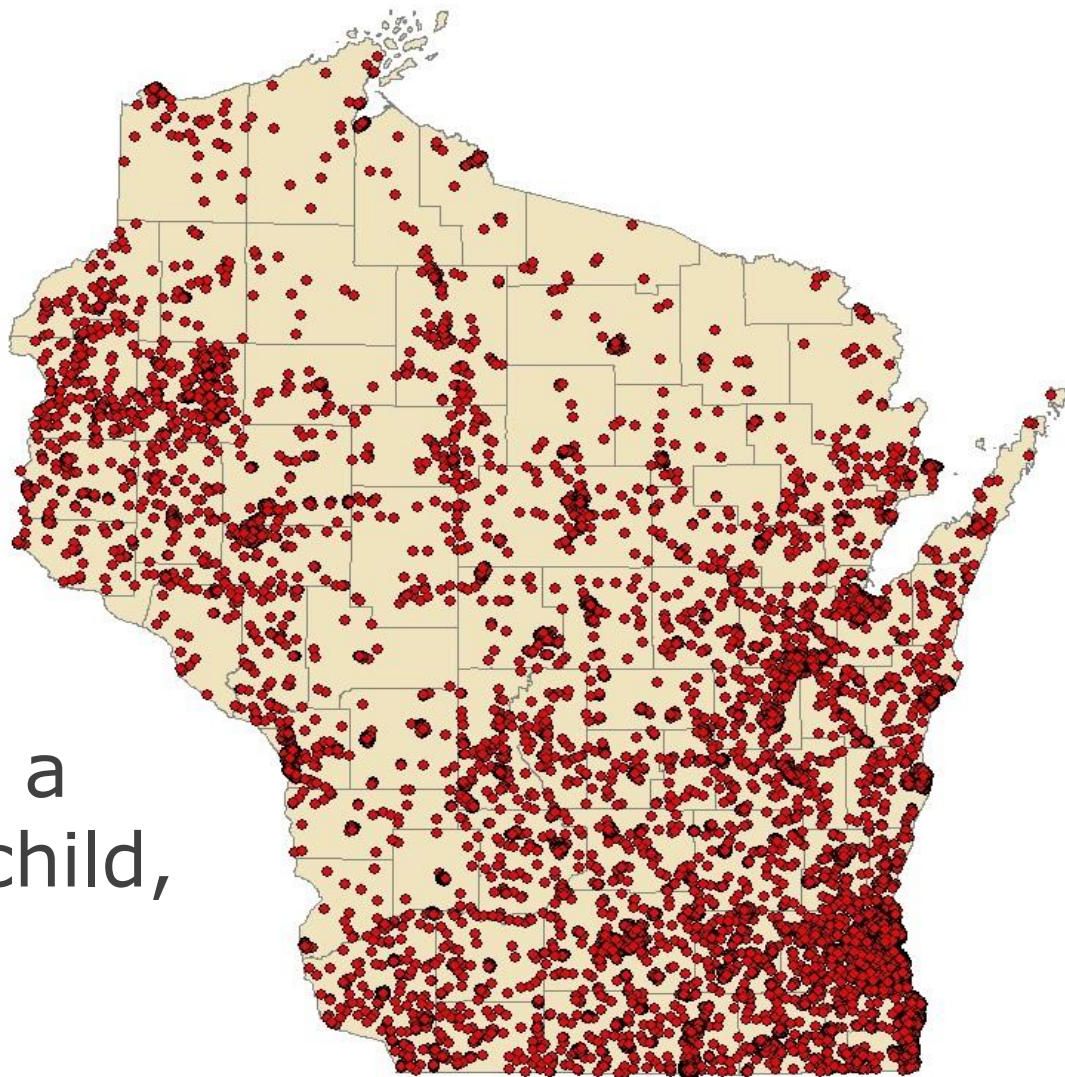
- Background childhood lead poisoning
- Burden of lead poisoning in Wisconsin
- Major sources of lead exposure
 - ◆ Paint
 - ◆ Water
 - ◆ Occupational (take-home lead)
- DHS efforts to reduce childhood lead poisoning



Background: Lead Poisoning

- Lead is a naturally-occurring metal
- Large presence in environment – paint, soil, plumbing components, gasoline
- No known safe level of lead exposure
- Exposure in early childhood linked to decreased IQ and behavioral disorders
- Lead poisoning is defined as ≥ 5 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood (mcg/dL)

Burden of Lead Poisoning in Wisconsin



Addresses with a
lead poisoned child,
1996-2016

Causes and Sources of Lead Poisoning

- Paint and soil in and around pre-1978 housing
- Lead-contaminated water
- Take-home lead exposure
- Consumer products: toys, jewelry, cookware, traditional medicines

Lead Poisoning from Water

- Major source of lead in water: lead-containing plumbing components
- Water may be a larger contributor to total lead exposure at lower blood lead levels
- Risks highest in young, bottle-fed infants

DHS Activities and Initiatives

- Promote blood lead testing
- Collect and track blood lead test results
- Provide grants to local health agencies to inspect homes for lead hazards, including water
- Certify lead professionals and enforce lead regulations
- Analyze contribution of occupational lead
- Test water in child care facilities

DHS Activities: Lead-Safe Homes Program

- Using a combination of federal Medicaid and state GPR funds, abate lead hazards in homes of children or pregnant women on Medicaid or BadgerCare Plus
- Partner with local housing programs and community development agencies
- Train and build the number of certified lead abatement contractors available in Wisconsin

DHS Activities: Occupational “Take-Home” Lead

- Surveillance for occupational lead poisoning
- Follow-up outreach and education with lead poisoned adults
- Education on “take-home” lead that can poison children
- Link adult and childhood databases

DHS Activities: Lead in Water

- Training and education for local health departments
- Scientific review of literature
- Guidance for local and tribal public health agencies, child care facilities, and homeowners
- US EPA WIIN grant, 2-year grant beginning in fall of 2019, for testing drinking water in schools and child care facilities

In Summary

- Wisconsin needs to address all major sources of lead exposure
- Reducing lead-paint hazards will result in the largest reduction of lead poisoning
- Eliminating lead in water from plumbing fixtures requires long-term infrastructure investments

DHS Conclusions

- DHS is committed to pursuing innovative methods to increase testing, educate the public, and address lead hazards
- Governor Evers is committed to abating and preventing lead exposure, and has directed the Department to coordinate this work.
- DHS sees lead exposure as a public health priority, and is committed to working across state agencies on this effort.

Lead and Drinking Water (WI DNR)

Lead is regulated by the DNR under the Safe Drinking Water Act

- Public water systems must maintain water quality so water is not corrosive to pipes
- Testing at select homes or fixtures
- If too many homes exceed 15 ppb, take actions to reduce lead
- Not every home, school, daycare, or business is tested

Lead and Drinking Water (WI DNR)

- Until all lead materials are removed from plumbing systems, there will be a risk of lead exposure from drinking water
- US EPA is in the process of revising the lead and copper rule (draft expected in 2019)