

Ohio Lead Free Kids Coalition

#LeadFreeKidsOH

**Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee on Am. Sub HB 166
June 13, 2019**

Thank you Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke and Ranking Member Sykes and Senate Finance Committee members.

My name is Patricia Barnes and I offer this testimony to you today as co-chair of the Ohio Lead Free Kids Coalition, Executive Director of the Ohio Healthy Homes Network, and an interested party on issues related to lead, lead poisoned children and the prevention of child lead poisoning. Together with the Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University, we co-chair the Ohio Lead Free Kids Coalition which seeks to secure the public commitment and investment needed to ensure all Ohio children are safe from lead in their homes and communities. We offered testimony before the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid as well.

We are grateful for the investments in Am Sub HB 166 that further advance primary prevention of childhood lead poisoning.

Thousands of Ohio children under 6 have been poisoned by lead and continue to be exposed to lead hazards. Over a 10-year period (2007-2016), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) reported 23,252 children with elevated blood lead levels (EBLLs), which is a conservative number.¹ We now know that the key to preventing lead poisoning in children is the identification and elimination of major sources of lead exposure. As noted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics: “**primary prevention is now widely recognized as the optimal strategy.**”²

As you may know, lead paint and dust in pre-1978 housing – homes built prior to when lead paint was banned in 1978 – remains the single most toxic source of lead for children. Primary prevention requires targeting the source and ensuring

¹ In 2016, of the 162,185 children who tested for lead, 4,591 (2.83%) had confirmed EBLLs. In 2015, following a recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Ohio Department of Health dropped the level of concern to 5 ug/dL (micrograms per deciliter of blood)

² Council on Environmental Health, Prevention of Childhood Lead Toxicity. Pediatrics (July 2016), Vol. 138. Issue 1 at <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/1/e20161493> See also CDC Response to Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention.

those homes are lead-safe.

Ohio has already begun to move in this direction with development of the ODH's and Ohio Department of Medicaid's (ODM) lead hazard abatement program using SCHIP funding. Senate Bill### preserves this program and strives to increase its impact by removing some administrative barriers.

We were disappointed that amendment to create an Ohio Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rule in the budget bill was not included. The amendment creates an Ohio RRP Program through transfer of administration from the USEPA's to the Ohio Department of Health.³ The RRP is crucial to protecting children from lead exposure because it ensures that contractors and other workers have appropriate training and guidance to keep children safe during renovation and repair activities.

To be clear, the RRP rule was designed to protect children from lead hazards that can be created when lead-based paint is disturbed during renovation in pre-1978 structures. The RRP Rule requires those who work on renovation, repair and painting projects in residences and child caring facilities built prior to 1978 to be trained and certified in lead-safe RRP work practices. RRP covers residential rental property owners/managers, general contractors, firms and special trade contractors, such as painters, plumbers, carpenters and electricians.

Moving management of the RRP to Ohio ensures the Rule will be effectively administered in Ohio without any additional regulations or fees. ODH is well positioned to manage the RRP program through its many years of experience with the lead licensure program.⁴ This level of experience will enable ODH to connect renovators with RRP training in their communities, provide information about certification, process applications for certification, oversee RRP training programs, investigate complaints and provide public education on lead safe work practices.

Indeed, Ohioans not only benefit by better protecting our children from lead poisoning but by making fees more reasonable and equitable for contractors and by keeping all Ohio dollars in Ohio to support this work. After the initial ramp-up

³ USEPA Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting Program <https://www.epa.gov/lead/lead-renovation-repair-and-painting-program>

⁴ Fourteen (14) states have been authorized to administer the RRP Program: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin. <https://www.epa.gov/lead/getcertified>

period, income will be self-generating to support the program. Moving administration of the RRP to Ohio is both a low-cost and effective way Ohio can protect young children from lead hazards.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership in preventing child lead poisoning. We request your support for moving the RRP Program to Ohio and are eager to work in partnership with Governor DeWine and the Legislature to ensure lead safety for all Ohio children.