



**Ohio Children's Hospital Association**

*Saving, protecting and enhancing children's lives*

**Sarah Kincaid**  
**Vice President, Ohio Children's Hospital Association**  
**Testimony before Ohio House Public Utilities Committee**  
**HB 226**  
**Wednesday, January 24, 2024**

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Robb Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Ohio House Public Utilities Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 226.

Ohio has the world's best statewide network of children's hospitals – Akron Children's Hospital, Cincinnati Children's, Dayton Children's, Nationwide Children's Hospital, UH/Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital and ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital. Several of our institutions are ranked among U.S. News & World Report's best children's hospitals, and all our members are ranked best in class in the nation in various aspects of pediatric care. Ohio is the only state in the nation with a flagship children's hospital within a two-hour drive of every family, including our most rural parts of the state.

The Ohio Children's Hospital Association (OCHA) supports HB 226 and its goal to reduce lead exposure. Lead poisoning is dangerous, yet very preventable. Lead poisoning occurs when lead — a metal that was once a common ingredient in paint and is still used in batteries, pipes, pottery, and even cosmetics — builds up in the body. Little by little, lead can collect in your child's blood, brain, and bones.

Symptoms may take a long time to appear, but at toxic levels, lead poisoning can affect your child's language, attention, and even IQ. Lead can affect people of all ages, but children aged 6 and younger are especially at risk, in part because their growing bodies absorb more lead. Children can develop anemia, hearing problems, fatigue, irritability, slowed growth, and behavioral and learning problems. Babies in the womb who are exposed to lead through their mothers may have learning difficulties and slowed growth.

All of our hospitals care for children harmed by lead exposure. Families are provided screening diagnosis and treatment for those who may be suffering from lead poisoning. Children's hospitals teams include a board-certified pediatrician, clinical nurse coordinator, and specialists from clinical pharmacology/toxicology, nutrition, neuropsychology, and social work. In addition, Ohio's poison control centers are owned and operated by two of our member hospitals at Cincinnati Children's and Nationwide Children's.

OCHA appreciates the sponsors' efforts to improve health outcomes for kids. Reducing barriers for families to minimize lead exposure in their homes will help accomplish that goal. We ask the Ohio House Public Utilities Committee to support HB 226. Thank you.