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April 25, 2016

The Honorable Cheri Bustos
United States Congress, House of Representatives
1009 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6115

Re: State of Illinois Lead Program

Dear Congresswoman Bustos:

I regret that a representative from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) will not be able to attend this evening's Galesburg City Council Work Session. I appreciate your April 24, 2016, invitation and wish to provide responses to the questions enumerated in your letter. We request that the entirety of this letter be incorporated into the record as part of the public comment period of tonight's meeting.

1. *What is the percentage of total children tested in Knox County with blood lead levels of 10 micrograms per deciliter or above in 2014?*

Response: The percentage of all children tested in Knox County with $\geq 10\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ in 2014 was 4.9%.

2. *As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends action be taken to prevent further exposure for children with blood lead levels of 5 micrograms per deciliter or above, what is the percentage of total children tested in Knox County with blood lead levels of 5 micrograms per deciliter or above in 2014?*

Response: The percentage of all children tested in Knox County with $\geq 5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ in 2014 was 14.3%.

3. *When referring to the percentage of children in Knox County with elevated blood lead levels, what is the appropriate statistic?*

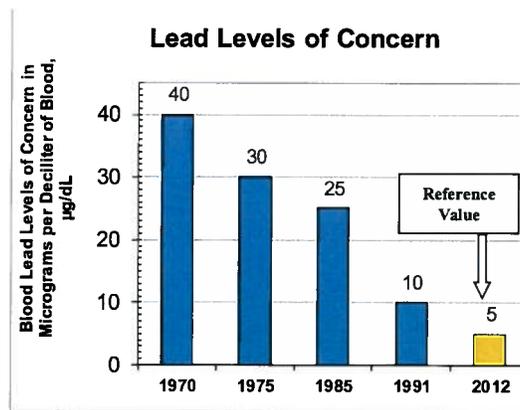
Response: IDPH reports blood lead data in various ways. Table 9 of our 2014 Annual Surveillance Report contains data on all children tested in each county in Illinois (*i.e.*, prevalence) as well as data on children tested for the first time¹ (*i.e.*, incidence). The figures reported in questions 1 and 2 above represent prevalence data. Both data points are of importance in public health.

¹In Knox County, the percentage of children tested for the first time with lead $\geq 10\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ was 2.0% for venous and 1.4% for capillary blood draws. The percentage of children tested for the first time with lead $\geq 5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ was 5.5% for venous and 6.6% for capillary blood draws.

4. *In the State of Illinois, what is the threshold for a child's blood lead level to be considered high or elevated? What is the significance of that value? How does this differ from the CDC's reference level of 5 micrograms per deciliter?*

Response: At present, IDPH's regulations define an elevated blood lead level to be $\geq 10\mu\text{g/dL}$. Elevated blood lead levels trigger various interventions by public health officials including, but not limited to, case management by IDPH or local health department delegate agencies.

CDC has historically established a threshold lead "level of concern." A level of $10\mu\text{g/dL}$ was established in 1991. In 2012, CDC lowered its "level of concern" to $5\mu\text{g/dL}$, as noted in the graph below. To date, 16 states have adopted the CDC's current reference value of $5\mu\text{g/dL}$. The remaining 34 states each have action levels $\geq 5\mu\text{g/dL}$.



Please do not hesitate to contact me at (312) 814-5278 if you have further questions.

Very truly yours,

Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D.
Director, Illinois Department of Public Health

cc: Kathy Lydon
Deputy Chief of Staff for Federal Affairs

Michele Gabriel
Administrator, Knox County Health Department