

# Lead News for Healthcare Providers: Volume 2, Issue 1

SPRING/SUMMER 2017

Western NY Lead Poisoning Resource Center, Rochester Office

## WE NEED YOUR HELP TO IMPROVE BLOOD LEAD TESTING RATES!



A recently published research article in Pediatrics notes that “based on the best available estimates, under-testing of blood lead levels by pediatric care providers appears to be endemic in many states.” While New York State does well compared to other states in the study (NYS ranks 7

out of the 38 reporting), many children with elevated blood lead levels are not identified. Healthcare providers like you are the key to detecting lead exposure in children!

See *Assessing Child Lead Poisoning Case Ascertainment in the US, 1999–2010* Roberts et al. *PEDIATRICS* Volume 139, number 5, May 2017.

## HOW IS THE FINGER LAKES REGION DOING ON LEAD TESTING?

The most recent NYS DOH data on lead testing shows that only 40% of children in our Finger Lakes Region get at least two blood lead tests before their third birthday. Over 8000 children per year in our area are not being tested as required! According to NYS Public Health Law, children must get a blood lead test at or around their first and second birthdays and whenever they may have been exposed to lead. Tests of one year olds and two year olds are important. For children exposed to lead, blood lead levels tend to increase in the first two years of life and peak at 18-24 months. Testing at age 1 can identify children with elevated blood lead levels early on. The 2 year old test is crucial because children at that age are so mobile and put everything in their mouths. Another test at 18 months is a good idea especially for children with winter birthdays, who won't otherwise get tested during the summer months when risk is higher.

### Percentage of children born in 2011 with at least two lead tests by 36 months

Finger Lakes County	Total Number Tested	Children born in 2011	Percentage
<u>Chemung</u>	277	1,025	27.0
<u>Livingston</u>	142	577	24.6
<u>Monroe</u>	3,697	8,427	43.9
<u>Ontario</u>	427	1,020	41.9
<u>Schuyler</u>	53	161	32.9
<u>Seneca</u>	99	399	24.8
<u>Steuben</u>	354	1,058	33.5
<u>Wayne</u>	512	1,033	49.6
<u>Yates</u>	78	302	25.8
<b>Finger Lakes Tot.</b>	<b>5,639</b>	<b>14,002</b>	<b>40.3</b>
<b>NYS Total</b>	<b>135,012</b>	<b>239,736</b>	<b>56.3</b>

Source: 2011-2014 NYS Child Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program Data as of June, 2016 <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/chac/general/q27.htm>  
(Click on a county name for trend graph data)

To receive this newsletter by e-mail, contact [jenniferd\\_becker@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:jenniferd_becker@urmc.rochester.edu)

## OVERCOMING BARRIERS

There are many barriers to getting children tested for lead. We polled county health department lead program staff and asked “What do you see as the top three barriers to improving blood lead testing among young children?” and listed answers below.

### How does your healthcare practice overcome these barriers?

#### Health care providers:

- Don't emphasize importance of blood lead testing to parents
- Forget to check medical record/NYSIIS to see if child is due for blood lead test
- Do risk assessment with a questionnaire but do not order blood test
- Too busy to follow up if parents don't get children tested as ordered

#### Parents:

- Don't understand the effects of lead on their children and importance of getting it checked
- Are busy, so may not follow through when a blood lead test is ordered, even if a lab in the same building.
- May lack transportation or access to a lab
- Have other priorities (e.g. if impoverished – finding food feels more important)
- Don't want to subject their child to a blood draw



## ASSESSMENT

In addition to testing for lead in children's blood at ages 1 & 2, New York State Health Care Providers are responsible for assessing the risk of lead exposure using a questionnaire at every well child visit between 6 months and 6 years of age. If there is a yes answer to any question, then a blood lead test must be ordered. NYS recommends these questions, which you can tailor to your specific patient population:

### Lead Exposure Risk Assessment Questions for All Children Less than 6 Years

- Does your child live in or regularly visit an older home/building with peeling or chipping paint, or with recent or ongoing renovation or remodeling?
- Has your child spent any time outside the U.S. in the past year?
- Does your child have a brother/sister, housemate/playmate being followed or treated for lead poisoning?
- Does your child eat non-food items (pica)?
- Does your child often come in contact with an adult whose job or hobby involves exposure to lead?
- Does your family use traditional medicine, health remedies, cosmetics, powders, spices, or food from other countries?
- Does your family cook, store, or serve food in leaded crystal, pewter, or pottery from Asia or Latin America?

<https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2501/#questions>

# DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING FOR KIDS WITH ELEVATED BLOOD LEAD LEVELS

An elevated blood lead level should be viewed as a risk factor for neuro-developmental problems in children. There are many factors in how much lead impacts a child including: age of child, duration of exposure, diet, and mitigating factors such as an enriched learning environment. Because we do not know which children will need extra attention, all children with a blood lead level of 5 mcg/dL or higher need ongoing developmental assessment. The CDC webpage **Developmental Monitoring and Screening for Health Professionals** has excellent resources for “integrating screening services into primary care efficiently and at low cost, while ensuring thorough coordination of care.” See [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/screening-hcp.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/screening-hcp.html).

**CHILDHOOD MILESTONES: 2 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS**  
**WATCH YOUR CHILD FOR SIGNS OF LEAD EXPOSURE AS THEY GROW**

**TAKE NOTES ABOUT YOUR CHILD**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 AGE \_\_\_\_\_

**BEHAVIORS YOU HAVE NOTICED**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**LEARNING PROBLEM SOLVING**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**SENSORY HELP**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**LEAD EXPOSURE CONCERNING**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**WATCH YOUR CHILD FOR SIGNS OF LEAD EXPOSURE AS THEY GROW!** You can download this chart from the Head Start website (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/docs/lead-milestones.pdf>) to post in your office.

## TWO NEW NYS BILLS RELATED TO BLOOD LEAD LEVELS

Rochester’s Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning and the Finger Lakes Coalition to Stop Lead Poisoning have been instrumental in working with NYS Senator Hannon and Assemblyman Morelle to introduce a lead related bill in the NYS legislature. If enacted, Bill A3899-S3941 will grant schools access to students’ blood lead levels in the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS). The CDC

recommends that schools have this information to identify children whose learning may be impacted by lead exposure.

Assemblyman Sean Ryan also introduced a lead-related bill (A6906) which would reduce New York State’s definition of “elevated lead level” from 10 mcg/dL to 5 mcg/dL in the New York State CDC’s 2012 blood lead “reference level.”

## LEAD COALITION CONTACTS



**Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning**

[www.letsmakeleadhistory.org/](http://www.letsmakeleadhistory.org/)  
 (585) 224-3125

Covers Monroe County primarily

**Finger Lakes Coalition to Stop Lead Poisoning**

(585) 396-4343

Covers 8 counties:  
 Chemung, Livingston, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates

# NO LEVEL IS SAFE... PREVENT LEAD EXPOSURE IN CHILDREN!

Need an update about lead poisoning and its management for your staff?

Have a question about a patient with lead poisoning?

Contact us! 585-276-3105 or toll free: 877-352-5775



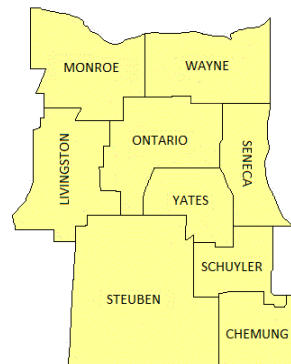
DIRECTOR

Stanley Schaffer MD, MS



COORDINATOR

Jennifer Becker MPH



Serving 9 counties in the  
Finger Lakes Region

To receive this newsletter by e-mail, contact [jenniferd\\_becker@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:jenniferd_becker@urmc.rochester.edu)

## WESTERN NEW YORK LEAD POISONING RESOURCE CENTER, ROCHESTER OFFICE

Golisano Children's Hospital, Division of General Pediatrics  
601 Elmwood Avenue, Box 777  
Rochester, NY 14642

Toll free: 877-352-5775

[www.Golisano.URMC.edu/lead-poisoning](http://www.Golisano.URMC.edu/lead-poisoning)

Supported by the NYS Department of Health  
[www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/)

Address Service Requested



MEDICINE of THE HIGHEST ORDER



UR  
MEDICINE

GOLISANO  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL