

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Primary Prevention Childhood Lead Program (PPCLP)**

The Niagara County Department of Health is announcing the award of a \$200,000 Primary Prevention Childhood Lead Program (PPCLP) grant from the New York State Department of Health to address childhood lead poisoning in Niagara County from a prevention standpoint. Despite substantial progress, childhood lead poisoning remains a major problem in Niagara County, across New York State and around the country. Since there is no medical treatment that permanently reverses the neuro-developmental effects of exposure to lead, primary prevention, which is taking action before a child is harmed, is critical to address the problem. Primary prevention marks an important augmentation to the traditional approach, which responds only to children who have already been lead poisoned.

The Niagara County Department of Health will be joining ten local health departments across New York State in this program, eight of which already have two-years' experience in the program, which we will draw upon. Our PPCLP will be housed at Trott in the City of Niagara Falls, where we will focus our initial efforts around Zip Code 14301, an area of high risk where we have encountered 28% of our traditional lead investigations since 2004 and where 91% of the housing stock was built prior to 1970. Lead based paint was banned in the United States in 1978, so the vast majority of the houses in this zip code contain lead paint. Addressing houses with lead paint issues, providing a lead safe environment, will be paramount to the children and the program.

Our year one goals of the PPCLP include:

1. Identifying housing at greatest risk of lead paint hazards
2. Developing partnerships and community engagement to promote primary prevention of childhood lead poisoning
3. Promoting interventions to create lead-safe housing units
4. Building Lead Safe Work Practices (LSWP) workforce capacity
5. Identifying community resources for lead-hazard control

The Niagara County Department of Health intends to initiate its PPCLP with the formation of partnerships with local government, community, faith-based and private organizations so as to tailor our program design to meet local needs and conditions. We will also experiment with different approaches for education, outreach, targeting high risk populations, and service delivery, so as to create a workable environment for primary prevention.

Anyone seeking more information on the PPCLP can contact the writer at 439-7444. Additional program information will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead.

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