



## Lead Advisory Committee and Healthy Homes Outreach Task Force

Quarterly Meeting Summary

November 14, 2023

### Summary

On Tuesday, November 14, forty- four lead and healthy homes professionals met in person and via Zoom for the quarterly NC Lead and Healthy Homes Outreach Task Force meeting. Prior to the meeting, members were asked to submit their program updates on lead and healthy homes activities in an online survey, responses included below. In the absence of Megan Lane, Public Science and Internship Coordinator in the UNC IE Center for Public Engagement with Science, Neasha Graves coordinated this task force meetings. The meetings are supported by funding from the NC DHHS Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (NC CLPPP) and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS).

### Local, State, and Federal Updates

#### **Hanna Kirlin - City of Charlotte**

- The current grant officially closes November 16th and we will have started our newest one November 1st. This new grant will be for four years.
- *The Adventures of Lead Lady* has now been published. This book will be distributed at local libraries, little free libraries, outreach events, etc. A second publication will take place at the beginning of the new year which will be the full intended version of the book: cardboard toddler book with interactive flaps that provides additional education about lead hazards for parents.

#### **Alexandria Rimmer - Orange County**

- Working to strengthen relationships with other county agencies to better help connect and refer families. Several outreach presentations with our childcare health consultant groups and childcare centers and social workers at OCHD for referrals.
- We continue to receive referrals for Healthy Homes and recently had a lead investigation at a childcare facility. Internally we are working on bringing more attention to both programs and working on involving more staff in our Healthy Homes program to help strengthen it.

#### **Paige Isley – Alamance County**

- New to the Lead and Healthy Homes position.

#### **Robert Gardener - City of Wilmington**

- HUD OLHCHH grant funded Healthy Homes Program is in full production status.

#### **Tashaunda Hill – Pitt County**

- Community events have included the KidsFest Spooktacular Event and Community Baby Shower hosted by Martin-Pitt Partnership for Children for which we provided Lead Poisoning Prevention education for families.
- We are educating and promoting child care providers on the Clean Classrooms for Carolina Kids roll out.

#### **Megan Lee – Craven County**

- We set up a booth in our health department for National Lead Poisoning Prevention week where we provided educational materials in three different languages (English, Spanish, and Burmese) and also handed out certified lead check swabs for those who were concerned they may have hazards in or around their home.
- We have had 3 EBL cases over the last couple of months. One of our EBL cases were found to be consuming the recalled WanaBana product that recently made headlines.



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### **Karin Evanoff- Occupational & Environmental Epidemiology**

- Primarily works with North Carolina companies that have employees that are occasionally exposed to lead. She has a lot of partnerships with companies offering education and supporting their efforts to help improve safety and protection of their employees.
- This allows companies to understand what is required of them from an OSHA and Department of Labor standpoint. In the process of migrating to a new system for NC lead. Recently worked with Dr. Beuhler on a case where the blood lead level was 128 ppb.
- When she first started 3 years ago, they had a lot of cases with blood lead levels over 40 µg/dL. She thinks education and outreach has allowed the numbers to drop significantly.
- *Question from meeting participant to Karin:* What did you do with the gentleman man who had an adult lead level of over 100? She was very consistent in contacting the pediatrics office.

### **Kate Koehler- State Lab**

- Her coworker Chris Goforth was the inorganic chemistry lab that identified the WanaBana applesauce as a lead source.

### **Jeff Smedley- Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS**

- About three weeks ago, there was report released about Lead, Cadmium and Chocolate. There were claims that metals were found in Hershey's cocoa powder and tested at 125 ppb. Relevant links:
  - [https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/press\\_release/consumer-reports-urges-hersheys-to-get-heavy-metals-out-of-chocolate-products/#:~:text=Hershey's%20Special%20Dark%20Mildly%20Sweet,of%20cadmium%20in%20CR's%20tests](https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/press_release/consumer-reports-urges-hersheys-to-get-heavy-metals-out-of-chocolate-products/#:~:text=Hershey's%20Special%20Dark%20Mildly%20Sweet,of%20cadmium%20in%20CR's%20tests)
  - <https://www.consumerreports.org/health/food-safety/a-third-of-chocolate-products-are-high-in-heavy-metals-a4844566398/>
  - <https://oehha.ca.gov/chemicals/lead-and-lead-compounds>
- Next NCLEAD training will be on December on 14<sup>th</sup> at 9am via Zoom. The topic that will be covered is **Special Cases - Spices, Cosmetics, Alternative Medicines , and Occupations**. Visit this link to register: <https://nchealthyhomes.com/resources/nlead-training-webinars/>.

### **Donna Coleman – NC Housing Finance Agency**

- We are in the process of posting our NOFAs for the Urgent Repair Program (URP) at \$8.5 million and Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation (ESFR) Loan Pool at \$11 million. This is when we pick partners for the next 18 months (URP) or 3 years (ESFR) to administer these funds in local jurisdictions. ESFR in particular is focused on testing for and removing found toxins from units such as: lead, radon, asbestos, etc. and has a fresh air delivery minimum requirement. Finding partners in some counties is very difficult so I hope everyone will take a look at the website [www.nchfa.com](http://www.nchfa.com), including Community Partners. Displacement Prevention Program (DPP) is a program focused on accessibility that we fund DHHS to administer. See the production numbers for 2022 below.  
2022 Rehab Production: **URP**; 682 units; \$4,280,171 disbursed. **DPP**; 456 units; \$3,548,354 disbursed. **ESFR**; 226 units; \$8,396,243 disbursed. **Total**: 1364 units; \$16,224,768 disbursed
- This is the list of counties covered in the NCHFA's Essential Single-Family Rehab Program NOFO: Alamance, Ashe, Bertie, Bladen, Burke, Camden, Chatham, Currituck, Dare, Gaston, Graham, Greene, Haywood, Hoke, Hyde, Iredell, Jones, Lee, Madison, Martin, Mitchell, Montgomery, Pasquotank, Pender, Polk, Rockingham, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Wake, Warren, Wayne and Wilkes.
- Relevant links:  
**Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool:** <https://www.nchfa.com/home-ownership-partners/community-partners/community-programs/single-family-rehabilitation-loan-pool>



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**Urgent Repair Program:** <https://www.nchfa.com/home-ownership-partners/community-partners/community-programs/urgent-repair-program>

### Neasha Graves – UNC IE Center for Public Engagement with Science

- Neasha Graves, Ed Norman and Samantha Sites will represent the NC Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (NC CLPPP) during the annual meeting of the CDC funded CLPPPs. Neasha will give a brief presentation on the 2023 clinical lead training and NCLEAD training series, as part of the efforts to enhance lead testing and follow-up. She will also lead a panel discussion on lead work in hard-to-reach communities following the worst of COVID-19.
- UNC IE has been conducting lead and healthy homes trainings in Chapel Hill, Kinston and Tarboro since the last task force meeting, with a goal of enhancing partnerships with programs new to healthy homes, for programs with new staff, and to develop partnerships in rural eastern NC.

### Discussion

#### WanaBana Brand Apple Cinnamon Puree Recall

- In the summer, Alan Honeycutt conducted some lead investigations and none of the usual sources were present. They recently developed a spice data collection form to help them further investigate. One of the children involved in this case had an EBL case. The other three children involved blood lead level was over 10.
- One of the food sources that were accessed was the apple sauce and processed through the NC Lead system. After the investigation in October, they got the data from the state lab. Every sample with cinnamon from Wana- Bana contained lead. The product is imported of Ecuador and the spice is suspected to be the lead source.
- Tonya Zimmerman –There are CLPPP cases in Rowan and Alamance County where children were consuming cinnamon apple sauce. Samples have been sent to the state lab and they are waiting on results.
- Relevant links:  
<https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/investigation-elevated-lead-levels-cinnamon-applesauce-pouches-november-2023>  
Recall alert: <https://nchealthyhomes.com/lead-poisoning/#target>

### Guest Presentation

#### Climate Change and Health Connections to Your Work

Dana Haine, K-12 Science Education Manager in the UNC IE Center for Public Engagement with Science conducted an interactive presentation, with a focus on flooding, extreme temperatures and other impacts from climate change on the health of many populations served by public health and housing participants who typically attend the meetings. Both in-person and virtual meeting participants discussed their views on concerns, challenges and potential solutions for addressing the needs of residents they serve, particularly those at high risk for the worst health outcomes from climate change.

### Attendees

Brenda Bass	Environmental Health Regional Specialist	Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS	<a href="mailto:brenda.bass@dhhs.nc.gov">brenda.bass@dhhs.nc.gov</a>
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