



Lead Advisory Committee and Healthy Homes Outreach Task Force

Quarterly Meeting Summary

November 12, 2024

Summary

On November 12, 2024, forty-two 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, and responses are included below. This meeting was 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

Donna Coleman (NC Housing Finance Agency) shared the following updates on provisions made for low-income residents who need financial resources to remediate the health hazards in their homes. She shared the NCHFA (North Carolina Housing Finance Agency) website and highlighted useful resources under the "Community Programs" section, particularly for professionals working with lead.

- **Urgent Repair Program:**
 - The program focuses on urgent repairs that present a danger to the household.
 - To qualify, households must meet low-income requirements.
 - The current funding is up to \$15,000 per housing unit, with an expected 35 to 40 homes to be awarded funding. This program is funded by the General Assembly.
- **Question on Loan Interest Rate:** David Brown asked about the interest rate on the loan. Donna's Answer: The loan interest rate is zero.
- **ESFR (Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation) Program:**
 - The ESFR program will be posted in the spring 2025. Offers up to \$70,000 per unit, with a total funding pool of \$11 million over three years.

Neasha Graves (UNC Center for Public Engagement with Science) shared the following announcements and reminders. Most were shared in emails to the Task Force listserv.

- Healthy Homes (December 11) and Environmental Asthma Triggers (December 16) trainings are scheduled to be held at the Europa Center in Chapel Hill, with each starting at 10am. The registration flyer and [registration link](#) have been shared with the Task Force listserv.
- Task Force members were reminded to complete [this survey](#) by **December 5** to help with the planning for the 2025 meetings.
- The 2025 Task Force meetings are set for **February 11, May 13, August 12, and November 18**.
- A survey will be shared at the end of the year to get feedback on past Task Force meetings, the NC Healthy Homes website and the effectiveness of other healthy homes programming.

Discussions

Emergence of certain sources of lead exposure: The group exchanged concerns about [recently] unusual sources of lead exposure, including vintage jewelry, Latin American pottery, and DIY home remodeling projects.

Vintage Pottery Issue (Doris Hogan, Forsyth County Health Department):

- Doris has encountered lead levels in low-cost vintage pottery ranging from 100,000 to 600,000 parts per million, particularly from a local flea market. The pottery was imported from abroad by a vendor, and children exposed to these items were showing concerning lead levels.
- Doris expressed frustration about the challenges of educating the public about these risks, especially at such a large venue as the flea market. She suggested reaching out to vendors and the community through media channels for awareness.
- Other participants agreed that this was an unusual but important issue to address, and there was a discussion about how to better promote awareness and help with education about health risks.

DIY Home Remodeling:

- Meeting participants discussed concerns about DIY home remodeling, particularly with lead exposure from old paint and wood, which can be a significant risk in older homes.

Suggestions for follow-up on emerging sources of lead:

- Suggestions were made to enhance outreach efforts regarding the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, which was enforced several years ago to discourage the purchase of potentially contaminated products in flea markets, yard sales and thrift stores.
- Nellie Benitez mentioned reaching out to Latin radio stations and media to help spread the word on DIY projects and imported pottery, and other participants offered support in terms of resources and information.
- There was a suggestion to build on existing outreach strategies, considering alternative materials and methods to engage with families and the community.
- Conversations about working with store owners, vendors, and other stakeholders to reduce lead exposure risks were also discussed as potential next steps.

EPA Lead Standards and Legislative Adoption (Ed Norman, NC DPH Children’s Environmental Health):

A question was raised about whether there are plans to adopt the EPA's lead standards at the state level.

- Ed explained that there are no current plans for adoption in this legislative session. However, he noted that it isn't too late to introduce changes, if necessary, as it is the long NC legislative session.
- There was some discussion about the challenges of implementing stricter standards, particularly regarding soil lead levels and the complexity of regulatory changes. Some members of the group expressed concern about the impact of such changes on residential and development projects.
- Ed emphasized that while it may not be feasible in the short term, it is an important issue to consider for future legislative actions.
- Ed shared that although the political climate is tenuous, it is still important to consider potentially positive long-term impact from such policy.

Hurricane Helene Impact and Recovery:

- The group acknowledged the ongoing recovery efforts in areas impacted by Hurricane Helene. Those attending the meeting, either in person or virtually, were reminded that support is available for communities still affected by the disaster.
- Resources and materials to assist with recovery, particularly around environmental health, are being updated and shared. The group was directed to visit the NC Healthy Homes website for [disaster recovery resources](#).

Relative Links & Upcoming Events

[Urgent Repair Program | NCHFA](#)

[Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool | NCHFA](#)

[NC Disaster Response and Recovery webpage](#)

Guest Presentation

Dr. Corinne Keet, MD, PhD, a Professor of Pediatrics and expert in allergy and immunology, presented her work on “**Housing Policy as a Tool to Reduce Asthma Disparities**,” particularly a focus housing for low-income children in Baltimore with asthma. Her research involved a study of health impacts on children with asthma with frequent emergency department visits and hospitalizations who were moved to less hazardous housing.

Attendees

Joseph Aguilar	Healthy Homes Coordinator	Orange County	jaguilar@orangecountync.gov
Brenda Bass	Regional Environmental Health Specialist	Children’s Environmental Health, NC DHHS	brenda.bass@dhhs.nc.gov

Nellie Benitez	Lead and Focus on Fathers Program Specialist IV	Chatham County Public Health Department	nellie.benitez@chathamcountync.gov
Kimly Blount	Field Supervisor	Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS	kimly.blount@dhhs.nc.gov
Alex Brown	Public Health Epidemiologist	North Carolina Division of Public Health	alex.brown@dhhs.nc.gov
David Brown	Regional Environmental Health Specialist	Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS	w.david.brown@dhhs.nc.gov
Keandra Cofield	Operations Manager	North Carolina Division of Public Health	keandra.cofield@dhhs.nc.gov
Donna Coleman	Senior Housing Rehabilitation Officer	North Carolina Housing Finance Agency	djcoleman@nchfa.com
Traci Colley	Environmental Health Director	Union County Health Department	traci.colley@unioncountync.gov
Karin Evanoff	Occupational Health Nurse	NC DHHS Adult Blood Lead Program	karin.evanoff@dhhs.nc.gov
Luke Van Eyk	Environmental Health Program Specialist	Guilford County	lvaneyk@guilfordcountync.gov
Rhona Gallant	Registered Nurse	Onslow County Health Department	rhonda_gallant@onslowcountync.gov
RB Gardener	Healthy Homes Program Manager	City of Wilmington	robert.gardener@wilmingtonnc.gov
Donna Gilbird	Retired Environmental Health Specialist	Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS	donna.gilbird@dhhs.nc.gov
Neasha Graves	Environmental Health Outreach Manager	UNC Institute for the Environment, CPES	neasha_graves@unc.edu
Zachary Green	Industrial Hygiene Consultant	NC DHHS Health Hazards Control Unit	zachary.green@dhhs.nc.gov
Barrette Gregory	Regional Environmental Health Specialist	Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS	barrette.gregory@dhhs.nc.gov
Tashaunda Hill	Environmental Program Specialist	Pitt County Environmental Health	tashaunda.hill@pittcountync.gov
Dana Haine	Science Educator	UNC Institute for the Environment, CPES	dhaine@unc.edu
Doris Hogan	Senior Environmental Health Specialist	Forsyth County Department of Public Health	hoganda@forsyth.cc

Maniraj Jeyaraju	Resident Physician	UNC Hospital	jmaniraj@email.unc.edu
Mitierra Johnson	Research Associate	UNC Institute for the Environment, CPES	jmitierr@unc.edu
Corinne Keet	Professor of Pediatrics, UNC Chapel Hill	Pediatric Allergy/Immunology	corinne_keet@med.unc.edu
Charlotte Keziah	Supervisor	Union County Children's Environmental Health Program	charlotte.keziah@unioncountync.gov
Pam Lindsay	Environmental Health Specialist	Sampson County Health Department	plindsay@sampsonnc.com
Tara Lucas	State Child Health Consultant/ Nurse Supervisor	NC Division of Family and Child Well -Being	tara.lucas@dhhs.nc.gov
Angela Maskill	Healthy Homes Program Manager	Reinvestment Partners	amaskill@reinvestmentpartners.org
Monica Mckinney	Environmental Health Supervisor	Appalachian District Health Department	monicar@apphealth.com
Ruth Medlin	Pediatric Asthma Program Manager	UNC Children's Allergy & Asthma Center	ruth.medlin@unchealth.unc.edu
Sue Norcia			suenorcia@gmail.com
Ed Norman	Program Manager	Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS	ed.norman@dhhs.nc.gov
Rob Pearsall	Regional Environmental Health Specialist	Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS	robert.pearsall@dhhs.nc.gov
Carla Pressley	Environmental Health Specialist	Harnett County	cpressley@harnett.org
Jennifer Redmon	Senior Director, Environmental Health and Water Quality	RTI International	jredmon@rti.org
Roger Rooks	Industrial Hygiene Consultant	NC Health Hazards Control Unit	roger.rooks@dhhs.nc.gov
Tena Hand-Schafale	Data Manager	NC DHHS	tena.hand@dhhs.nc.gov
Melinda Shuler	Director of Quality Management	Cherokee Hospital	melinda.shuler@cherokeehospital.org
Samantha Sites	Public Health Epidemiologist	Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS	samantha.sites@dhhs.nc.gov
Porcha Small	Environmental Health Specialist	Cumberland County Health Department	ssmall@cumberlandcountync.gov

Jeff Smedley	Epidemiologist	Children's Environmental Health, NC DHHS	jeff.smedley@dhhs.nc.gov
Theresa Stenersen	Regional Child Care Consultant	NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center	theresa_stenersen@unc.edu