



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

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Charlotte Keziah	Supervisor	Union County Children's Environmental Health Program	charlotte.keziah@unioncountync.gov
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Angela Maskill	Healthy Homes Program Manager	Reinvestment Partners	amaskill@reinvestmentpartners.org
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