AGENDA NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS September 24, 2024

AND JANICE HAHN

Proclamation of Lead Poisoning Prevention Week In Los Angeles County: Ensuring Residents Are Lead-Aware

Proclaiming October 20-26, 2024, as Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in Los Angeles County is a critical avenue to amplify and expand awareness about the dangers of lead exposure, the symptoms of lead poisoning, and protective measures. Beyond this week, it serves as a catalyst for sustained community education on the pervasive risks associated with lead.

Lead is a naturally occurring element that has been widely used for industrial purposes such as in batteries, gasoline, and historically in paint. Lead is invisible, tasteless, and odorless, making it a silent but highly toxic threat to both humans and animals. There are no safe levels of lead exposure. Prolonged exposure to high levels of lead is frequently prevalent in low-income neighborhoods, and by extension communities of color, from both industrial and residential sources. These communities often suffer from environmental inequities, with higher concentrations of freeways,

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battery smelters, oil fields, and aging homes with lead-based paint. Communities with known high levels of lead contamination from polluters such as Exide, are disproportionately impacted and only scratch the surface.

Other sources of lead poisoning include lead dust brought home on family members' work clothes, certain imported ceramic pottery, painted objects, traditional home remedies, traditional cosmetics, and imported spices, candies, drinking water, and other food products. Additionally, activities that involve lead products such as soldering, making stained glass, and handling bullets or fishing sinkers can put adults and children at risk. The various means of exposure to lead further lends to the need for more education.

The prevalence and prolonged exposure to lead impacts residents across the County of Los Angeles since it does not immediately resolve. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), lead can linger in the body for years- months in the soft tissues and decades in bones. Additionally, living in an urban area, such as Los Angeles, exposure to some level of lead is almost inevitable. The only way to know if one has been lead-poisoned is by getting a blood lead test. Children should be screened at 1 and 2 years of age, and any time they are potentially exposed to a lead source. Adults should request a blood lead test from their medical provider if exposed to a lead hazard source.

Pets are equally vulnerable to lead exposure, as they can have direct contact with lead contaminated soil and track contaminated soil into homes. This is particularly concerning in lower-income communities, where access to affordable medical care or veterinary care may be limited. Providing community members with information about

recognizing lead poisoning symptoms in their pets is crucial, as early intervention can be lifesaving.

Community members, regardless of age or zip code, should have access to health education in multiple languages on the short-term and long-term effects of lead exposure, and what they can do to protect themselves. While young children are most vulnerable due to their developing bodies and heightened absorption of lead, seniors, individuals living with disabilities, and the general population are also at risk of negative health outcomes resulting from lead exposure.

Medical providers in Los Angeles County should also be reminded that lead exposure remains a widespread health risk across the County. Routine blood lead screenings in young children are mandated but often missed, as noted in a recent California Department of Public Health (CDPH) report. Lead poisoning is completely preventable and medical providers must prioritize these screenings and be responsive to any patient expressing concerns about lead exposure.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is an opportunity to shine light on these critical issues and drive long-term action, ensuring that all Angelenos are informed and protected from the dangers of lead.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim October 20-26, 2024, Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in Los Angeles County.

WE, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Public Health to:

1. Launch a formal health education campaign during Lead Poisoning Prevention Week that is culturally and linguistically accessible with a goal to:

a. Encourage parents to have children screened for lead by a medical provider at ages 1 and 2, or whenever there is a potential exposure to lead from lead-based paint, consumer products, or other sources; and
b. Encourage community members to participate in Lead Poisoning Prevention Week events hosted by Department of Public Health's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Event details will be found on Public Health's social media platforms: @lapublichealth on Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), and Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Facebook page.

2. Collaborate with Los Angeles County Chief Executive Officer's Countywide Communications to promote Lead Poisoning Prevention Week across social media platforms and invite County employees to Lead Poisoning Prevention Week events;
3. Develop health education materials and presentations that are linguistically accessible in the County's top 5 languages, with readiness to interpret into more languages as needed, and address: short and long-term symptoms and effects of lead on individuals across the age spectrum; special considerations for older adults and individuals with disabilities; lead poisoning prevention; actions post-lead exposure, such as nutrition; and information on identifying signs of lead exposure illness in pets and next steps; and intentionally engage residents in outreach and engagement activities;
4. Collaborate with the following school districts, but not limited to LAUSD, Hacienda La Puente Unified School District, Baldwin Park School District, El

Monte City School District, and Pomona Unified School District to provide health education information regarding lead exposure and actions post-exposure for TK-12 school-aged children; additionally collaborate with LACOE, and applicable parent and student groups, to promote Lead Poisoning Prevention Week and provide ongoing health education regarding impact of lead on health and post exposure care;

5. Collaborate with Los Angeles County Department of Health Services to make health education materials visibly available at relevant County facilities, including hospitals and clinics;
6. Engage County employed and contracted medical providers with educational material and the need to screen young children;
7. Track the number of individuals actively engaged regarding lead and report back at both 6-months and 12-months, noting how they were reached, whether it was a school setting and by Supervisorial District; and
8. Collaborate with County Counsel to report back in 90 days on the feasibility of including a requirement in Memorandums of Understanding and contracts with external medical providers that indicates they must customarily screen young children and provide education about lead exposure to their patients.

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