



For more information:

Kaletha Henry

443-842-5712

khenry@gghi.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 14, 2018

New Report Details Action Plan to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning In New Jersey

Green & Healthy Homes Initiative unveils lead poisoning elimination plan

TRENTON – A group of New Jersey’s leading health, housing and community development advocates released a report today detailing specific, actionable strategies to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in New Jersey in 10 years. The 2018 New Jersey Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Action Plan was authored by Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI), through support from The Fund for New Jersey and New Jersey Health Initiatives, the statewide grantmaking program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

In 2016, the most recent year for which data are available, over 4,800 children in New Jersey were still identified with elevated blood lead levels. There is a clear link between early childhood lead exposure and cognitive damage. Children exposed to lead are more likely to have behavioral health problems, are less likely to reach grade-level proficiency at school and to graduate high school, and earn less over their lifetimes. Advocates agree that lead poisoning is an entirely preventable disease and that the opportunity exists to eliminate lead poisoning in New Jersey.

“Ending childhood lead poisoning in New Jersey and throughout the United States is critical to preparing children and communities to reach their full potential. For far too long, the toxic legacy of lead has damaged children’s brains and undermined the ability of generations of New Jersey children to compete in the classroom or excel in the work place. It is time to bring an end to this costly, tragic yet entirely preventable problem,” said Ruth Ann Norton, president and chief executive officer of the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative. “Thanks to the support of The Fund and NJHI, this Action Plan lays out a workable, achievable plan to end lead poisoning in the State and demonstrates the significant economic and human benefits of investing in prevention at scale. There is no better business case or moral cause than delivering on the promise to end lead poisoning in New Jersey.”

“The Fund for New Jersey is proud to be a philanthropic partner in this collaboration to end childhood lead poisoning in New Jersey over the next 10 years. The Fund for New Jersey is confident that this goal can and will be achieved. We welcome other grantmakers, government partners, businesses, and community-based organizations to work together to once and for all end childhood lead poisoning in New Jersey,” said Kiki Jamieson, president of The Fund for New Jersey.

Bob Atkins, Director of New Jersey Health Initiatives added, “Partnership is the key to moving the needle on issues just like this in New Jersey. By working alongside these organizations to develop this report, we’ve created the opportunity to catalyze conversations toward long-term, sustainable change in multiple sectors.”

Based on proven national best practices, extensive research and first-person interviews with dozens of stakeholders across New Jersey, the Action Plan provides a comprehensive framework of policy, practice, and funding recommendations to address the causes of lead poisoning. The recommendations are focused on those most at-risk for lead poisoning – New Jersey’s low-income children, children of color and immigrant communities and are designed to assist the state in implementing best practices that fit for New Jersey.

The 2018 New Jersey Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Action Plan was unveiled at a press conference at the New Jersey State House Annex today. Strategic partnership and insights were provided to GHHI by Advocates for Children of New Jersey, Isles, and the members of the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey (“the Network”).

“During his inauguration, Governor Murphy said a stronger and fairer New Jersey would include homes that are safe from the danger of lead,” said Staci Berger, president and chief executive officer of the Network. “This Action Plan presents viable solutions to accomplish that common goal. We look forward to working with the new administration and the legislature to end, once and for all, this public health crisis harming our children. It also addresses crucial program changes that can rehabilitate dangerous homes for children, regardless of their family’s immigration status, to prevent lead poisoning.”

“This is an important report that is testament to the evolution of our collective knowledge about our homes’ impact on family health in New Jersey. We look forward to working with Governor Murphy to act on this knowledge. We are also pleased that the recommendations in the Governor’s Transition Report align with the GHHI recommendations,” said Marty Johnson, President of Isles, Inc.

“We know that lead exposure risk can vary neighborhood by neighborhood and sometimes even block by block. That’s why a successful lead prevention strategy requires strong collaboration and data sharing with the people who can use it best – local health departments, nonprofits, community groups and families. As New Jersey has learned in past campaigns, data and public information are invaluable in the fight against lead exposure,” said Cecilia Zalkind, President and CEO of Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ).

To review the full New Jersey Lead Poisoning Prevention Action Plan, along with more information, visit:

http://www.greenandhealthyhomes.org/sites/default/files/GHHI_NJReport_5E.pdf

#