

Letter regarding CDC funding

May X, 2011

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education
U.S. House of Representatives
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2012 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations bill, we urge your support for a national public health priority – protecting children from health hazards in their homes. We respectfully request you provide \$50 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch.

On June 9, 2009, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a call to action on healthy homes, saying that “health must begin at home. To improve the nation’s overall health, we must improve the health of the nation’s homes and ensure that safe, healthy, affordable, accessible, and environmentally friendly homes are available to everyone in the United States.”

Every year, approximately 250,000 children are lead poisoned in the United States. Repeated studies have linked lead poisoning with developmental delays, attention deficit disorder, IQ reductions, hearing loss, sight problems, and other chronic health conditions. Sadly, children with lead poisoning are more likely to drop out of school.

Increasingly, national and local efforts are linking lead poisoning prevention to holistic, cost-effective housing interventions that improve indoor air quality, reduce injury hazards, and prevent lead poisoning at the same time.

The CDC’s lead poisoning prevention program is providing leadership in the healthy housing movement, and was recently renamed the Healthy Housing and Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch. Providing healthy, safe housing for our nation’s children will help our children to succeed in school and to contribute to their community as adults.

Despite the innovation of the Healthy Housing and Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch, its funding has steadily decreased in the past ten years. This year, the branch awarded grants to states and the District of Columbia to prevent lead poisoning and increase the health and safety of housing. Jurisdictions have developed and implemented – in collaboration with public entities, faith-based organizations, and

businesses – strategic plans to eliminate lead poisoning. The Branch has also awarded six grants for healthy housing initiatives to local programs.

Funding for CDC's lead poisoning prevention program will address unmet needs, and allow the CDC to:

1. Support cities with high rates of lead poisoning and identifiable islands of risk, such as properties where multiple children have been poisoned, and properties with multiple code violations;
2. Address increased risk from lead poisoning from non-paint sources, including water, toys, and other consumer products;
3. Support efforts to increase case management and inspections that increase the health and safety of housing;
4. Expand healthy housing initiatives that use evidence-based methods to reduce lead exposure, injuries, and environmental health risks in a comprehensive, coordinated manner; and
5. Build capacity for healthy housing by supporting the delivery of training and technical assistance at the State and local levels.

Thank you for your support of lead poisoning prevention and healthy housing. Together we can ensure that our children grow up in healthy, safe environments.

Sincerely,
