



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

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MDHHS continues combatting lead poisoning with two new programs

LANSING, Mich. – As part of an ongoing commitment to improving outcomes for children and families affected by lead, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is introducing two new programs in communities with lead Action Level Exceedances (ALEs) – blood lead level testing via a mobile clinic and faith-based lead awareness. Communities receiving additional support include Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Kalamazoo and Berrien counties.

ALES are issued by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy when elevated levels of lead or copper in household drinking water are identified through routine regulatory testing under the [state's Lead and Copper Rule](#).

Blood lead testing rates have dropped over the past year, which is concerning for state health officials.

“Exposure to lead can have devastating long term health consequences, particularly for children,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, MDHHS chief medical executive and chief deputy for health. “It is important that we make sure all children have access to lead testing and prevention services. We want to make sure parents and families understand the risk of lead hazards and have the resources to be able to protect themselves.”

To increase testing among affected Michiganders, a mobile unit is being offered through an agreement with Wayne Health. In addition to blood lead level testing, the mobile unit will offer flu shots, blood pressure screening, HIV testing and on-site referrals for public benefits including Medicaid, cash assistance, unemployment assistance, emergency food and shelter services and other vital points of care.

In addition to blood testing, MDHHS is partnering with faith leaders in these communities to combine existing outreach efforts with trusted community partners. Faith leaders can be invaluable resources as they understand the communities they serve. By educating faith-based partners to share this information, MDHHS is able to both build trust within the communities needing assistance and maximizing the potential to help them as well.

“We all know that education, and the lack thereof, are crucial determinants of our children’s fate and future. Few things impede that growth more than the impact of lead on the cognitive development of our children. Consequently, lead testing is crucial to detecting and addressing such a potential threat to their wellbeing,” said Rev. Horace L. Sheffield III, director of the Detroit Association of Black Organizations and pastor at New Destiny Christian Fellowship.

Other strategies to reduce lead exposure include distribution of lead-reducing water filters to vulnerable residents, sampling water of homes within ALE communities and a comprehensive outreach program focused on reducing exposure to all sources of lead.

Testing for blood lead is free for everyone and scheduled events are below:

- May 22, Highland Park City Hall, 12050 Woodward Ave., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- May 23, Judson Center, 12100 13 Mile Road, 1-4 p.m.
- Additional dates to be announced

For more information about lead, visit [Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe](https://www.michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe) or call MDHHS at 517-335-8885.

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