

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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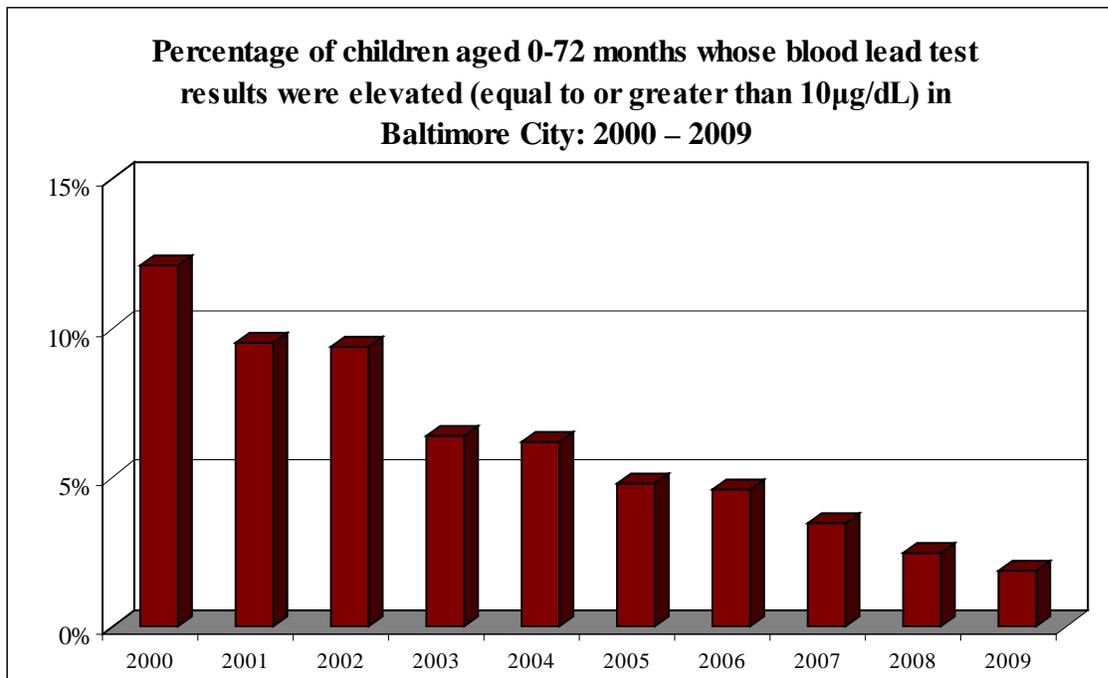
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Data Watch: Maryland Department of the Environment Releases 2009 Lead Poisoning Data

BALTIMORE, MD (August 27, 2010) – The Maryland Department of the Environment is reporting today that in 2009, 347 children – or 1.8 percent of the 19,043 children tested in Baltimore City – had elevated blood lead levels (at least 10 micrograms per deciliter). This represents a 26 percent decrease from the number of children with elevated blood levels in 2008.

Over the past decade, the number of children with elevated blood lead levels has fallen from 2,189 children in 2000 to 347 children last year – a decrease of 84 percent.



The number of children with especially high blood lead levels also decreased. In 2009, 38 children in Baltimore City were identified with lead levels over 20 micrograms per deciliter (including only venous blood tests). This represents a 40 percent decrease from 63 children in 2008.

“Our efforts over the last decade to improve the health of children in Baltimore City have been a remarkable success,” said Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. “We must keep up our collaborative effort to ensure all children are lead-free. I look forward to the day when lead poisoning, like polio, is a distant memory and no longer a detriment to child development.”

The Baltimore City Health Department provides education and case management to all families with lead-exposed children and uses legal enforcement to correct lead hazards in their homes. In addition, the Baltimore City Health Department has several efforts to prevent lead poisoning and help low-income property owners repair lead hazards.

- **Primary Prevention Initiative:** The Baltimore City Health Department provides lead safety training to home visitors and health care workers who serve pregnant and post-partum high-risk, low-income women. When they identify pregnant women living in homes with lead risks, they refer these clients to the Department’s Primary Prevention Initiative. This Initiative provides education and supplies that enable families to reduce lead risks and other health hazards in the home *before* children are exposed.
- **Lead Training, Outreach and Policy (TOP) Initiative:** In 2008 the Baltimore City Health Department partnered with a variety of community organizations, government agencies, and non-profits to target populations that have not been reached by previous lead programs. The TOP Initiative has trained over 3,700 renters, homeowners, construction workers, day laborers, and property managers in lead safety training and two-day lead-safe work practices training. The Department continues to offer trainings to interested groups in both English and Spanish.
- **Lead Abatement Action Program:** The Baltimore City Health Department receives federal and state funding to provide grants and loans to residents of Baltimore City to aid in the stabilization and/or removal of lead contaminated components in their homes. Administered by LAAP, these funds are used to provide everything from lead paint risk assessments to providing contractors to temporary relocation (if needed). Since its inception in 1994, LAAP has helped to make 2,500 residences in Baltimore City lead-safe or lead-free.

“While we are happy about the continuing decline in Baltimore City lead exposures, we need to emphasize how important it is that all 1- and 2-year-old children continue to be tested. We estimate that tens of thousands of homes built before 1978 still have lead hazards,” said Commissioner of Health Dr. Oxiris Barbot.

For more information about lead and to view an educational video, visit www.baltimorehealth.org/lead.html. If your organization would like to host a lead safety training, please call 443-984-2460.

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