



August 5, 2019

The Honorable Gwen Moore
2252 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Moore:

On behalf of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (Children's), I write to express our support of the Preventing Lead Poisoning Act (H.R. 3842). We appreciate your leadership on this critical child health issue.

As you know, lead is a significant public health issue in Milwaukee and across the state. At Children's we understand firsthand the effects lead poisoning can have on a child's health and wellbeing, including learning difficulties, developmental delay and behavioral issues. There is no "natural" level of lead that comes from our diet or nature; therefore, any detectable level of lead in a person's bloodstream is there as environmental contamination. When it comes to lead and children, no level can be considered "safe."

At Children's, we are dedicated to providing the best care for children and we have implemented measures to increase testing and identification of children in need of care. We follow Wisconsin Lead Poisoning Prevention Program guidelines and recommendations for testing. This includes enhanced testing for children covered by Medicaid who live in areas with elevated lead poisoning risk, including Milwaukee and Racine. We have equipped each of our primary care sites with point-of-care testing instruments, so results are immediately known and shared with both families and the local health department at the time of testing. Lead testing compliance is one of our internal quality metrics for Primary Care, Children's Community Health Plan, and the Care4Kids program serving children in out-of-home care.

Eliminating the lead risk in our community will continue to take committed and coordinated action by community, health and government entities. Unlike other cities in the Great Lakes region, we have seen the number of children who are hospitalized for chelation therapy due to lead poisoning rise every two-year period since 2013. This is an issue that we can't ignore, and that needs continued focus and attention to address. Your legislation will put in statute current guidance that all children covered by Medicaid must receive a lead screening tests at 12 and 24 months, and between the ages of 24 and 72 months if not previously tested. Continuing to emphasize and prioritize blood lead level testing during the early years of a child's life is essential to identifying and addressing lead issues.

Again, we appreciate your leadership and look forward to continuing our work with you and your staff to address this significant public health issue in our community.

Sincerely,

Heather Paradis, MD, MPH
Medical Director, Community Services
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
hparadis@chw.org

