



TO: ARPA Funding Allocation Task Force
FROM: Bob Rohloff, Pediatrician, Medical Director, Health Management and Integrated Lead Program, Children's Wisconsin
DATE: Saturday, February 4, 2023
RE: Support for lead poisoning prevention efforts

Hello. I appreciate the opportunity to share perspectives with the Task Force today. My name is Bob Rohloff. I'm the medical director for Children's Wisconsin's integrated lead program. But first and foremost, I'm a pediatrician. And today, let's pretend we are all going to be pediatricians! We have all gone to college, then medical school, then residency. You love pediatrics. You love working with families to help them realize their dream of having a healthy, happy child who has a chance to be a happy, productive adult. You love pediatrics because it focuses on prevention and guidance. You love focusing on how to prevent children from becoming sick, injured or harmed. You focus on how to guide parents to help their child reach their maximum potential as human beings – to dream big and achieve those dreams! You love emphasizing the joy of parenting.

But you have a problem. The families you care for and work with live in houses that are older. Houses where lead is present. Your job is to test the children to see if they have lead in their bodies. You can't prevent them from getting poisoned by lead. All you can do is to do your best to test children and find the ones who are poisoned, the ones who may have lifelong effects from the lead poisoning that will affect their happiness as a child and affect their dreams and goals as adults. You see the problem and you feel powerless to prevent it.

Ok, how was your journey??

But today can be a new day! There is a commitment to working collaboratively across the community to support not only increased testing but to **aggressively** and **intentionally** address the need for prevention! The opportunity for community collaboration is greater now than I have ever seen it before. At Children's, our integrated lead program is aligned with the work at health care organizations like Sixteenth Street Community Health Center, with the Milwaukee Health Department, and community based-organizations like COLE and SDC who are focused on addressing lead poisoning. There is power in unity, power in community.

The environment in Milwaukee is right, the time is absolutely right to support **true** prevention of lead poisoning through the investment in programs like Healthy Homes which support **community solutions** to lead. Programs like these have demonstrated significant success preventing lead poisoning in other cities. An investment will help the community partnerships grow. The success of the program will attract private funding and more health care system participation. Importantly, I believe this program will help address housing safety concerns that have been negatively impacting the health and well-being of kids and families.

I look forward to a future where pediatricians will be able to tell a family that the blood lead test is **normal**, and their dreams for their child are intact.

I encourage the use of ARPA funds to support prevention of lead poisoning and to make home safer for Milwaukee children and families. Thank you for your consideration.

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