



Insider News

Lead and Healthy Homes
Division Newsletter
December 2018



Indiana State
Department of Health

Radon: Time to Take Action

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated January as National Radon Action Month. The EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General urge everyone to protect their health by testing the indoor air in their homes and schools for radon.

leading cause of lung cancer. It is estimated to cause more than 20,000 cancer deaths each year in the United States.

Take Action in January:

The EPA has many tools and resources available on its [website](#) for local health departments (LHDs) to use to promote National Radon Action Month in their communities. Resources include videos and PSAs promoting clean and healthy indoor air and the importance of testing for radon, print ads for newspapers and magazines, and other tools and resource for radon media campaigns. More information about radon can be found on many different websites, including [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [Indiana State Department of Health \(ISDH\)](#).

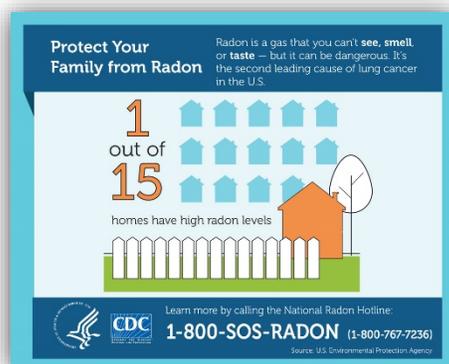
between the ages of 9 and 14. The winning posters will receive cash prizes ranging from \$200 to \$100., Contact **Stephanie Huber** of ALA at Stephanie.huber@lung.org or (217) 718-6692 for more information.

FREE Radon Testing Kits:

Free radon test kits that can be used throughout their communities are available to LHDs. After ordering the kits, take action to increase awareness about radon in your county by encouraging home and business owners to test their homes and businesses. Kits can be ordered by contacting either Samantha Coad of the ALA at Samantha.coad@lung.org or (217)718-6696, or the IN radon hotline at 1-800-272-9723.

IN Radon Poster Contest:

The ISDH Lead and Healthy Homes Division and the American Lung Association (ALA) are hosting a statewide **2019 Indiana Radon Poster Contest** for young Hoosiers



Radon, a radioactive gas, builds up in homes over time and can't be seen, tasted or smelled. An estimated 1 in 15 homes in the U.S. have high radon levels – and high radon levels can be a risk anywhere. Radon is the second



New ISDH Risk Assessor

The Lead and Healthy Homes Division is pleased to welcome Justin Meyers to our team. As an environmental professional, Justin is passionate about environmental conservation and



public health. With his earth and environmental science degree, Justin worked for several years as an environmental consultant in the Chicagoland area, and most recently in Colorado as an environmental protection specialist at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Justin is eager to have the opportunity to positively affect the health and well-being of all Hoosiers.

New CDC Video: Mission Unleaded

The CDC has released an 18-minute video, "[Mission Unleaded: How to test children for lead with maximum accuracy](#)". Because lead is present in many places, it is easy to contaminate blood samples during the collection process, which can cause inaccurate lab results. Learn how to reduce the risk of contamination and support achievement of accurate blood lead results for patients and their healthcare providers.

New ISDH Lead Testing Instructional Phlebotomy Videos

Two videos with information about the steps and procedures for performing finger stick/capillary and venipuncture blood lead draws are available on the [ISDH Lead and Healthy Homes Division website](#). The videos were developed by the ISDH lab and provide step-by-step demonstrations of the procedures for both types of blood lead draws.

State of the Division



Winter is here, and I could not be more excited about the snow, family gatherings and the extra warm blankets that come with it! For the Lead and Healthy Homes Division, winter means a slowdown in the lead tests received, an increased awareness of the risk of radon in Indiana, a look back on 2018 accomplishments and a chance to envision what 2019 and beyond will include.

2018 has been a year of discovery and learning for me as I had the opportunity to dig into division operations, identify areas for improvement, learn about the challenges you all face and work with the rest of the division to move our programs toward greater accountability, accuracy and transparency. Many of the changes made this year were behind the scenes as we have modified the way blood lead results are making it into our system and back out to local health departments. These changes, including improvements in the quality of data received from providers, will continue in 2019.

The division has also begun to set up systems that will provide health departments with greater transparency of blood lead test results. In December, a quarterly report containing all reported test results that are fewer than 5 µg/dL will be distributed to local health departments. In January, comparison reports will be compiled and distributed highlighting the differences between the test results of children receiving Medicaid benefits that have been reported to ISDH and the number of tests being billed to Medicaid.

Lastly, after much discussion and evaluation, the decision was made that in 2018, pursuit of a transition from STELLAR into HHL PSS – a new case management system – would not go forward. While not an easy decision, after looking at functionality, control and the ability to edit HHL PSS to meet Indiana's needs, it was decided that a better option would be to move our case management system into NBS instead. More information will be coming in the next six months on NBS testing, rollout and functionality.

I'll wrap up with a sentiment that I shared with state health department leadership a couple of months ago. "We are called to fix some immensely daunting challenges around lead, radon and healthy homes. Progress on any of these will require a shared commitment that is challenging and will necessitate each of us stepping out of our corner of the world to build, fail, learn and rebuild together."

I appreciate, and our entire division appreciates, your support toward these efforts. Please continue to hold us to a high standard. We'll do the same for you.

Thanks,

Paul Krievins

Lead and Health Homes Division Director

Quarterly Blood Lead Level Reports

Beginning in April 2019 the Lead and Healthy Homes Division will be sending local health departments a quarterly report containing the blood lead level test results of children with levels below 5 µg/dL that have been reported to ISDH in the previous quarter. To improve data quality, each report will go through an automated scrubbing process that has been developed to remove duplicated results and reduce the amount of bad information that is often found in these reports. These reports are intended to keep local health departments up to date on blood lead level tests that have been reported to the state, and to assist with case closeout. Reports for July 2018-November 2018 will be released to local health departments in December 2018, and reports for December 2018 will be released in January 2019. If you have any questions or feedback on the reports, please email Amy Hancock at ahancock1@isdh.in.gov.

ISDH Laboratory Blood Lead Testing

The ISDH Lab supplies filter paper for capillary finger-stick testing, lancets, alcohol pads, etc., and postage-paid envelopes free of charge to local health departments who use the lab's services for blood lead testing. Mailing tubes are provided for venous samples. Blood sample test is also free of charge.

A provider number is required to order supplies and can be obtained by emailing Kari Horsley at khorsley@isdh.in.gov. The supply order form and related collection and sample shipping forms can be found on the ISDH [Lead and Healthy Homes Division website](#).

Demographic information and reports are transmitted and received through the web portal [LimsNet](#), which requires a LimsNet login to use. Instructions and links for obtaining the login are provided by Kari during the process for obtaining a provider number.

Risk Assessment Tip

Older homes are not the only ones that may have lead hazards present. In elevated blood lead level cases, it is important to get a risk assessment, regardless of the age of the home, to discover where the hazard is located.

Although residential lead paint was banned in 1978, leaded components are still being reused and repurposed. Vintage components — such as barn siding, shiplap, windows and shutters — are being used to decorate/renovate newer homes for aesthetic appeal. Shutters and windows that may contain lead, are used as picture frames, organizers and various other things. Other sources of lead hazard include pottery and other ceramics that commonly contain leaded glaze.



Collecting dust samples during an assessment is important because lead can also be brought into the home on clothes that are worn while at work or while participating in a hobby that involves lead. Even with brand new homes it can be important to get a

couple of soil samples in case contaminated fill dirt was used. Without a risk assessment, the potential routes of exposure cannot be determined, which will contribute to less effective case management.

HUD's New Healthy Homes Youth App

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture Healthy Homes Partnership have released a new app to help middle-schoolers learn about potential household contaminants. These range from lead and mold to radon and volatile organic compounds.



This app helps kids learn about their home's indoor environment, learn about common hazards, and focus on actions they can take to have a healthy home.

The app can be downloaded from the App Store for customers with devices running iOS 11 or later, and MacOS 10.13 or later.

Lead and Healthy Homes Program Website Highlight

The [Indiana 2017 Childhood Lead Surveillance Report](#) is available on the website.

The report includes information on a variety of data and information concerning blood lead screening, case manager training and outreach, efforts taking place to address exposure concerns in East Chicago, and much more.

Case Management Tip

Documentation and Communication

Frequent and ongoing communication with ISDH concerning case management activities and progress is an important part of the case management process. Key pieces of information that need to be provided to the ISDH Case Management Coordinators (Geri Anderson and Teresa Kirby) include:

- Notification of the **completed home visit**
- The completed **Home Visit form**
- The **Manifest** with the "Local Health Department Contact Record" section completed
- Documentation, on an ongoing basis, of **contact being made** with family, healthcare providers, and other individuals connected with the case

To ensure compliance with HIPAA regulations, information should be sent to ISDH via fax (317-233-1630) or through SECURE email.

Geri and Teresa, and all Lead and Healthy Homes Division staff, are always available to assist.

fingers and other objects in their mouths.

Protect children from potential exposure and **learn about lead in toys**. More information about lead hazards in some holiday toys and toy jewelry can be found on the [CDC's website](#).

Grant Writing

Writing a grant can be intimidating, especially if this is your first time applying for a grant, or if you are not entirely familiar with the grant writing process. The following are some grant writing tips that may be helpful in your search for funding.

- Read the grant description carefully. Pay close attention to the guidelines and what is being requested.
 - Have a conversation with your colleagues. Does your organization have the capacity to accomplish what is included in the grant description? Can you really do what is being asked?
 - Evaluate whether this is worth your effort. Do not ask if you need the funding. Ask if you are ready and able to commit to the potential grant project.
 - Be sure your budget makes sense. Do you have the fiscal infrastructure to meet the financial reporting requirements and related tasks? Be sure your math adds up, your budget makes sense and it supports the objectives you are proposing to accomplish.
 - Know your grantor and how the specifics of the grant relate to the grantor's mission and goals.
- Start early. Try not to wait until the last minute to prepare your grants. The process will always take longer than you anticipate.
 - Spell out the need. To increase your chances of being accepted, clearly describe the need that your project will meet in the community and how it will make a significant impact for good.
 - Develop clear goals. Simple and clear goals let the reviewers know **WHAT** your goal is. Then – as they read your application – they can see **HOW** you are going to reach your goal.
 - Timing is everything. Let the reviewers know **WHEN** you will be doing the things you plan to do. A detailed timetable lets them know that you have given this work some thought and that you have a clear idea of the time it will take.
 - Recruit an objective reviewer. When you have completed your proposal, send it to someone who does not know anything about your organization. Does that person understand what you are trying to accomplish? Have you responded to every ask?
 - Pay close attention to details. Have you adhered to page limits, font size/type, margins and number of file types?

Lead in Toys

Do you know what is in those toys that you are buying for holiday gifts? **Lead** may be found in metal and plastic **toys**, especially imported toys, antique toys and toy jewelry. Children may be exposed to lead by simply handling toys, which includes the normal activity of placing toys,

CONTACT US

Indiana State Department
of Health
Lead and Healthy Homes
Division
317.232.1250
[Website is found here](#)