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MEDIA RELEASE

Information **Advisory** **Warning** **Update**

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Erica Smith, Public Health Nurse, (810) 987-5300 ext. 1455

esmith@stclaircounty.org

OR

Kevin McNeill, Sanitarian, (810) 987-5306 ext. 1429

kmcneill@stclaircounty.org

St. Clair County Health Department Encourages Residents to Learn about Lead Prevention Awareness National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is October 23-29, 2016

Nearly half a million children living in the United States have elevated blood lead levels that could cause significant damage to their health, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). To help address this, St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) is participating in *National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (NLPPW)* October 23-29, 2016.

Elevated blood lead levels in children are based on a test result of 5 micrograms per deciliter or higher. In Michigan, more than 3,000 children test positive for lead poisoning every year. Nearly 100 children in St. Clair County were found to have elevated blood lead levels in 2014.

Major sources of lead exposure to children include lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in deteriorating buildings. Children can also be exposed to lead from additional sources including contaminated drinking water, take-home exposures from a workplace, and lead in soil. Children age six and under are at greatest risk of becoming lead poisoned. This year's NLPPW theme, "*Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future*," underscores the importance of testing your home, testing your child, and learning how to prevent lead poisoning's serious health effects. These effects include behavior and learning problems (such as hyperactivity), slowed growth, hearing problems, and aggressive patterns of behavior. Stopping a child's exposure to lead is the best way to prevent the harmful effects of lead.

Parents can reduce a child's exposure to lead in many ways. Here are some simple things you can do to help protect your family:

1. *Get your home tested.* If you live in a home built before 1978, you may want to consider getting a lead inspection.
2. *Get your child tested.* If you suspect your child might be exposed to lead, talk to your doctor or call SCCHD at (810) 987-5300. Lead testing can be done by a simple finger poke at many doctor's offices and at SCCHD.
3. *Learn about drinking water.* The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures. The only way to know if you have lead in your drinking water is to call your water company or have your water tested.
4. *Understand the facts.* For more information, contact the MDHHS Michigan Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 888-322-4453 or visit www.michigan.gov/lead.

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