

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Department of Health Care Finance



**TO ALL PEDIATRICIANS, FAMILY PRACTITIONERS, HEALTH CLINICS AND  
MANAGED CARE ORGANIZATIONS SERVING DC MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES**

**Re: Required Lead Screenings – Every Child. Twice by Two.**

Dear Health Care Provider:

For Children’s Health Month and National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 23-29, 2016), the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) and the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF) **are writing to remind you of your legal obligation to perform lead screening as part of a well-child visit for all children you serve in the District of Columbia**, as outlined below. To review your full responsibilities under the lead screening and reporting law, visit: <http://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Gateway/ChapterHome.aspx?ChapterNumber=22-B73>.

Every Child. Twice by Two.

District law requires that every child who resides in the District of Columbia receive a first blood lead level (BLL) screening test between 6 months and 14 months of age and a second BLL screening test between 22 months and 26 months of age, once you have obtained parental consent, unless an identical test has already been performed in the previous 12 months. In addition, if a child over 26 months of age has not been tested, the law requires BLL testing at least twice before the child is 6 years of age.

Additional Screenings

District law also requires you to screen for lead when a child is at risk for high-dose lead exposure. Risk indicators include living in or frequently visiting deteriorated or renovated housing built before 1978, which by District law is presumed to include lead-based paint; having a household member who may be exposed to lead at work; or having neurological, behavioral, developmental, or other symptoms consistent with lead exposure.

Reporting

District law requires health care providers to report lead-poisoned children to DOEE’s Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program within 72 hours, however, **we ask that you report results to DOEE immediately if a child is identified with an elevated blood lead level equal to or greater than 5 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood (µg/dL)**, so DOEE can take prompt action to mitigate risks for the family and provide the care the child needs. To report an elevated blood lead level, **fax the result to DOEE’s secure fax line at (202) 535-2607 or call DOEE at (202) 654-6002**. Please also note that, by law, laboratories, and providers that use a blood lead testing device at the point of care, must report **all** test results to DOEE, not just elevated results.

### Education and Referral

In addition to legal requirements for providing family lead education and referrals for social and environmental services when a child has an elevated blood lead level, you have the important responsibility for providing anticipatory guidance to pregnant women, parents/guardians, and their families about the protective steps they can take to prevent lead exposure. Avoiding even the smallest exposure to lead is critical, since there is no known “safe” level of exposure. Visit <http://doee.dc.gov/node/613342> for helpful guidance you can share with those you serve.

### Childhood Lead Screening in the District of Columbia

A recent independent study of Medicaid claims and screening data for two groups of children enrolled in the District’s Medicaid program (a younger group, most of whom turned 14 months old in 2014; and an older group, most of whom turned 26 months old in 2014) showed more than 70 percent of the younger group and more than 85 percent of the older group were screened at least once during the study period. **However, more than two-thirds (68.5 percent) of the older children did not have the two screens required by District law.**

If you have any questions about the work by DHCF and DOEE on lead screening, please feel free to contact Colleen Sonosky, Associate Director of DHCF’s Division of Children’s Health Services, at (202) 442-5913, or Lisa Gilmore, Chief of DOEE’s Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Healthy Housing Branch, at (202) 535-2624.

Thank you for all that you continue to do to protect children’s health in our nation’s capital.

Sincerely,

Tommy Wells, Director  
District Department of the Environment

Wayne Turnage, Director  
Department of Health Care Finance