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News Release

John R. Kasich / Governor
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Ohio Department of Health Awarded \$2.1 Million for Lead Hazard Control

Funds will protect hundreds of children from exposure to lead in their homes

Columbus- Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Ted Wymyslo M.D. today accepted a check for \$2.1 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The funds will be used by ODH and its partners to identify and properly remediate lead hazards in homes in 36 counties.

"This award will allow ODH and our community partners to take our lead poisoning prevention efforts further than ever before," Dr. Wymyslo said today at a press conference at the Ohio Statehouse.

Housing built before 1950 poses the greatest lead hazard to young children. Out of the estimated 906,000 children in Ohio between 6 months and 6 years of age, 36 percent live in housing built prior to 1950. If lead is identified in a home, the only way to ensure children are not exposed is for the family to move or have the lead professionally controlled or abated.

"It can cost a family living in a lead contaminated home thousands of dollars to have the lead professionally controlled or abated," Dr. Wymyslo said. "This grant will give us the ability to assist hundreds of property owners who otherwise could not afford to make these critical changes."

The project targets 30 Appalachian counties and six counties in Northwest Ohio. Work has already begun to qualify families whose properties are under a lead hazard control order. The project will also pair the grant dollars with more than \$300,000 dedicated by community action agencies to make homes lead-safe, weatherized and energy efficient.

"Ohio's Community Action Network is very proud to partner in this effort to improve the safety of homes in Ohio," said Philip E. Cole, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies. "Safe, affordable housing is one of the keys to moving from poverty into self-sufficiency. A stable environment, free of hazards such as lead poisoning, allows children to grow and learn, parents to work and guide, and all families to thrive."

In addition to the federal award, the Ohio Department of Development provided \$200,000 and the Ohio Housing Finance Agency committed \$100,000 for the project.

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Since the inception of the lead poisoning prevention program, ODH has had great success reducing lead poisoning. Between 1999 and 2009, because of outreach, education and prevention efforts, Ohio witnessed a 73 percent decline in childhood lead poisoning cases.

Dr. Wymyslo noted that childhood lead poisoning remains a significant health threat for Ohio children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years of age. During this time in child's life, lead in the blood has been found to cause learning disabilities, hearing loss and other physical and developmental problems.

Families interested in applying for the project can contact the ODH Healthy Homes Program by calling 1-877-LEAD-SAFE.

For more information on the ODH Healthy Home Program visit:

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/cfhs/HEALTHYHOMES/healthy1.aspx>