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# **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **HUD Awards Dubuque \$3.6 Million for Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes Program**

DUBUQUE, Iowa – In an effort to protect children and families from potentially dangerous lead-based paint and other health and safety hazards, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded over \$139 million to 48 city, county, and state governments. The grant funding announced yesterday will reduce the number of lead-poisoned children and protect families by targeting health hazards in approximately 6,500 low-income homes with significant lead and/or other home health and safety hazards.

As part of this initiative, the City of Dubuque will be awarded \$2,999,968 in Lead Based Paint Hazard Reduction grant program funding and \$581,000 in Healthy Homes Supplemental funding. The City will use the funds to address lead hazards in 120 housing units providing safer homes for low and very low-income families with children. The City will also perform healthy homes assessments and complete health and safety improvements in the same 120 units.

The efforts in Dubuque will be a collaboration among the City's Housing & Community Development, Health Services Department, Office of Sustainability, Fire Department, and Police Departments will work with the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, the Dubuque Visiting Nurse Association, Crescent Community Health Center, Operation: New View Community Action Agency, Black Hills Energy, Alliant Energy, Green AmeriCorps, and Dubuque Community School District.

Since January 1992, the City of Dubuque has addressed childhood lead poisoning, first in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Public Health, and then by conducting its own Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. The federal Housing and Urban Development Department has awarded Dubuque \$3.69 million in 1997, \$2.4 million in 2003, \$2.98 million in 2007, \$3 million in 2011 for Lead and \$1 million for Healthy Homes, and \$3.2 million in 2015 for a combined total of \$16,604,432 million.

To date 1,280 units occupied by very low to moderate-income families with children have been made lead safe. More than 1,800 contractors, workers, owners, and inspectors have been trained. This program has initiated many cost-effective measures to prevent and eliminate childhood lead poisoning in Dubuque and has built local capacity through extensive public education efforts.

The goals of Dubuque's lead hazard control project are: 1) reduction of lead-poisoned children, especially throughout the target neighborhoods of Dubuque; 2) continuance of professional lead certification and training of area contractors, workers, program inspectors and property owners; 3) collaborative public education, awareness, and training of health professionals, tenants, and property owners; 4) integration and braiding of related services and resources from community partners who will promote and establish lead-safe housing throughout the neighborhoods of Dubuque; and 5) continued transition of Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Program to a more comprehensive Healthy Homes Program.

Healthy Homes funding addresses environmental hazards in the home to protect children and their families from housing-related health and safety hazards. A home assessment will be conducted utilizing a Healthy Homes rating system that identifies 29 potential hazards. Scoring of the hazard and the mitigations cost will determine which hazards are corrected. Simple, low-cost examples of hazard repairs may include installation of handrails and guardrails for trip hazards, installation of exhaust vents for mold prevention, placing of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, testing for Radon and providing Radon remediations, etc.

According to HUD, unsafe and unhealthy homes affect the health of millions of people of all income levels, geographic areas, and walks of life in the U.S. These unsafe and unhealthy homes affect the economy directly, through increased utilization of health care services, and indirectly through lost wages and increased school days missed. Housing improvements help prevent injuries and illnesses, reduce associated health care and social services costs, reduce absentee rates for children in school and adults at work, and reduce stress, all which help to improve the quality of life.

"The Trump administration's new Lead Action Plan reflects our strong commitment to preventing future generations from being affected by lead exposure," said HHS Secretary Alex Azar. "We know that lead exposure at a young age can result in serious effects on IQ, attention span, and academic achievement. We need to continue taking action to prevent these harmful effects. Identifying lead-exposed children, connecting them with appropriate services, and preventing other children from being exposed to lead are important public health priorities for this administration."

Developed through cross-governmental collaboration of the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children, which includes 17 federal departments and offices, the Lead Action Plan is a blueprint for reducing lead exposure and associated harms by working with a range of stakeholders, including states, tribes and local communities, along with businesses, property owners and parents.

The four goals of the Lead Action Plan are:

- Goal 1: Reduce Children's Exposure to Lead Sources

- Goal 2: Identify Lead-Exposed Children and Improve their Health Outcomes
- Goal 3: Communicate More Effectively with Stakeholders
- Goal 4: Support and Conduct Critical Research to Inform Efforts to Reduce Lead Exposures and Related Health Risks

The Lead Action Plan will help federal agencies work strategically and collaboratively to reduce exposure to lead and improve children's health. EPA and members of the task force will continue to engage with and reach out to community stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations.

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