

Dr. Erik Svendsen
Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice (DEHSP)
National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)

March 26, 2025

Dear Dr. Erik Svendsen, PhD, MS,

Beginning in January 2025, the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) identified hazardous levels of lead contamination in four Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) buildings. These findings, uncovered through separate case investigations by Milwaukee's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP), in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), confirmed lead hazards inside MPS buildings that exceed state safety standards.

MPS has about 15 million square feet of space at 144 active campuses. All but 11 of those school buildings were constructed before 1978, when commercial uses of lead-based paint were banned. Because of the age of many school buildings and deterioration of paint observed, MHD conducted visual inspections at ten more school buildings where seven showed significant lead hazards. Three of these schools were closed for lead hazards and remain closed as of March 26, 2025. These findings suggest contamination may be widespread in MPS schools and continued visual inspections are ongoing at additional schools.

MHD and DHS are requesting CDC's assistance with the investigation of lead exposure in MPS schools. Our objectives are as follows:

1. Develop a mass blood lead testing strategy for the Milwaukee Public Schools students.
2. Develop a questionnaire to assess blood lead exposure among children.
3. Build a database for the data collected through blood lead testing and the screening questionnaire. MHD owns any and all data.
4. Describe the epidemiology of blood lead levels among Milwaukee Public School students.
5. Develop strategies for increasing lead poisoning awareness and testing.
6. Conduct Outreach to community, parents, school nurses, health systems, medical providers, and others, to include education and promotion strategies and literature.

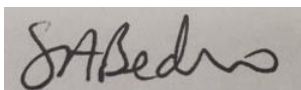
Assistance might also include a variety of activities not yet defined, all of which will remain under the direction and supervision of the City of Milwaukee Health Department. The City of Milwaukee Health Department will retain ownership of all data collected.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael F. Totoraitis, PhD
Commissioner of Health
City of Milwaukee Health Department

and,



Dr. Sheryl Bedno, MD, DrPH, CIP
Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist
Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health
Wisconsin Department of Health Services