

SUPPORT SB 2996: Protect Children by Updating Illinois' Lead Poisoning Definition to Meet CDC Standard

(Senate Sponsor: Collins; House Sponsor: Willis) Passed Both Houses on 5/21/18

Current State of Illinois rules for the Lead Poisoning Prevention Act define permissible limits for an elevated blood lead level in children that is twice as high as what is recommended by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Therefore, despite proven exposure to an environmental neurotoxin, thousands of Illinois children with lead poisoning are occupying housing and child care facilities that do not undergo a mandatory inspection. As a result, children are suffering from the debilitating consequences of an entirely preventable disease.

Key Provisions of SB 2996

- Directs the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to propose updated state rules no later than 180 days after the effective date of this Act to be in accordance with the CDC reference value for elevated blood lead level. The CDC standard was last updated in 2012 and is currently set at a blood lead level of 5 µg/dL ("micrograms per deciliter"). The CDC reference value was based on the U.S. population of children ages 1-5 years who were in the highest 2.5% of children when tested for lead in their blood. State rules currently define a blood lead test result of 10 µg/dL or higher as an "elevated result."
- Current rules for inspecting of regulated facilities based on the updated definition of elevated blood lead level or the history of lead hazards will also be updated. Inspections that detect lead hazards require that the hazard be mitigated by the owner.

SB 2996 Protects Thousands of Children at Risk of Permanent Brain Damage

IDPH, CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and other experts agree that *no level of lead exposure is safe*. IDPH data for Illinois from 2016 shows that:

- 65% of housing units were built prior to the residential lead paint ban of 1978, placing occupants at risk of lead poisoning.
- 1,417,824 housing units have significant lead-based paint hazards.
- 8,381 children 6 years of age or younger were tested who had blood lead levels at or above the CDC reference value, but only 1,792 of those children met the current Illinois definition for lead poisoning. Therefore, 6,589 children had blood lead levels at or above the CDC standard, but lower than the current Illinois definition.

SB 2996 is Cost Effective¹

- Lead poisoning is linked to brain damage, health issues, developmental delay, and behavioral problems, costing U.S. taxpayers \$30-146 million in special education and \$11-53 billion in healthcare expenses, among other significant costs to society.
- A reduction in the average preschool blood lead level of just 1 µg/dL "results in 116,541 fewer burglaries, 2,499 fewer robberies, 53,905 fewer aggravated assaults, 4,186 fewer rapes, and 717 fewer murders," and the elimination of attendant costs.

SB 2996 Demonstrates Illinois's Investment in Children

SB 2996 demonstrates Illinois' leadership in lead poisoning prevention. Illinois will join Maine, New Hampshire and New Jersey as the first states to adopt to the CDC standard. It will also support the goals of Governor Rauner's Cabinet on Children and Youth, which identified reducing the percentage of children with a lead blood level of 5 µg/dL or greater as a key performance indicator to improve the physical, emotional, and mental health of Illinois' young people.

¹ Childhood lead poisoning: conservative estimates of the social and economic benefits of lead hazard control
E Gould - Environmental Health Perspectives, 2009 - ncbi.nlm.nih.gov



For more information, please contact:

Bob Palmer, Policy Director, Housing Action Illinois
312-939-6075 | bob@housingactionil.org