



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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HHS Contact: Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239

IS YOUR HOUSE POISONING YOUR CHILDREN? *County Urges Parents to Get Children Tested for Lead Exposure; Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is Oct. 19 – 25*

WHAT: County health officials will test household items for lead in an effort to increase awareness of lead poisoning. During the week of Oct. 19 – 25, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency's (HHS) Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program will offer free finger stick blood testing and educational materials at County Public Health Centers, and educational materials at some County library branches and city libraries.

WHO: Chairman Greg Cox, First District, County Board of Supervisors
Nick Macchione, Director, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency
Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer
Virginia Gomez, parent whose child had lead poisoning
Leticia Ayala, Environmental Health Coalition

WHEN: Monday, Oct. 20
10:00 a.m.

WHERE: County Administration Center
West Plaza
1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego

WHY: Lead poisoning silently impacts the development of children nationwide. In 2007, San Diego County had the third highest number of lead poisoned children in the state. Approximately 310,000 U.S. children aged 1-5 years have elevated blood lead levels.

Lead poisoning affects brain development and can cause learning disabilities, behavior problems and, at very high levels, coma, seizures and death. Sources include items such as candy and toys, even deteriorated paint in older homes. Children are at higher risk because they put their hands, toys and other items into their mouths.

For more information on Childhood Lead Prevention Week activities and lead poisoning, call (619) 515-6694 or go to the HHS website at

<http://www2.sdcountry.ca.gov/hhsa/ServiceCategoryDetails.asp?ServiceAreaID=93>

VISUALS: **Members of the media are invited to bring one household item to be tested for the presence of lead.**

Other visuals: Reading of proclamation of Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week; candy, toys and other items that can contain lead; photos of items that can contain lead.

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