



News Release

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## **Salt Lake County Joins Effort To Prevent Lead Poisoning In Children**

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**Salt Lake County, UT**—Mayor Ben McAdams joined county health department and housing services officials today at a single family home to highlight a program that seeks to eliminate exposure to toxic lead-based paint. According to the Centers for Disease Control, lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust are the main source of exposure for lead in the children in the U.S.

“Lead is a known toxin that impairs children’s development. All children under the age of 6 are at risk for several reasons: they are growing rapidly and they tend to put their hands, or other objects, into their mouths,” said McAdams. “We know that lead poisoning is preventable, if we stop kids from coming into contact with lead and treat those who have been poisoned by it.”

McAdams noted that Salt Lake County is working with a \$2.5 million grant award from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) agency. That money is part of a \$98 million total, which funds a national effort across 38 local projects to protect children and families from the hazards of lead-based paint.

“With this funding it is estimated we will complete lead-based hazard reduction on at least 250 homes in Salt Lake County,” said Community Resources Director Mike Gallegos. “The work is underway, including at this home where remediation has been done.”

Gallegos said Salt Lake County signed The Green and Healthy Homes Initiative in November 2012. The compact is a partnership with the University of Utah Pediatrics Department, Intermountain Health Care, Asthma Task Force, Salt Lake Habitat for Humanity and other agencies. The goal is to address risks posed by the construction of some older homes—primarily built before 1978—so that illness and medical treatment expenses are avoided.

According to HUD's 2007 American Housing Survey, six million households live with moderate or severe physical housing problems. HUD Field Office Director Kelly Jorgenson said the lead-paint hazard control program is particularly focused on protecting the health of children and other sensitive populations in low-income households.

"The cost of housing-related health hazards to the U.S. is in the tens of billions of dollars annually. By working at the local level to neutralize those hazards, we are not only protecting children and families, we are also avoiding future costs to taxpayers," said Jorgenson.

McAdams says that families who need more information about getting their home checked can call (385) 468-4886.

See the lead paint clean-up fact sheet [here](#).

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