



Supported by Children First: The Advocate for Kids

Yeadon Borough Recognition

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Good evening, Mayor Hepkins, and thank you for the time to speak today on this important ordinance to protect children from lead paint poisoning in the Borough of Yeadon.

I am Rosemarie Halt Health Policy Consultant for Children First and the Lead-Free Promise Project as well as the Chair of the Board of Health for Delaware County.

Children First PA works to improve the lives of our region's children by developing initiatives and advocating for quality health care, childcare, public education, and family stability. Since 2008, Children First has facilitated the Delaware County Lead Poisoning Prevention Coalition comprised of a cross section of public and private entities that are committed to eliminating lead poisoning in Delaware County. Working together with the Children First statewide Lead-Free Promise Project which is 80 organizations and over 400 members fighting to increase childhood lead testing and prevent lead paint poisoning in children statewide.

Lead poisoning can cause permanent brain damage to children, especially children under 6 years of age. Lead can cause learning behavior, hearing, and speech problems. Lead paint hazards in homes, primarily rental units, are the main source of lead poisoning. Lead is a sweat tasting material that children once tasted will come back to the source time and time again. I think we all can visualize the image of child eating paint chips from an old windowsill. As my favorite pediatrician friend has said to me repeatedly Lead is heavy and ends up all over the body and is hard to remove. A child exposed to high concentrations of lead can have lifelong consequences impacting their learning, their health and ability to thrive as an adult.

Lead paint was not banned in residential use until 1978 and the majority of the residential properties in Yeadon were built between 1940 -1949 when lead paint was predominately used in homes and businesses.

Some public health facts to think about for Pennsylvania, Delaware County and Yeadon.

- PA has the second highest number of children poisoned in the nation with 11,500 children poisoned.
- 80% of the children in PA and 77% of children in Delaware County under the age of 6 have never been tested for lead poisoning!
- In 2022 when the 5 Year Action was unrolled 250 children were poisoned in 2024 that number was 450 children. Noting that the CDC changed the positive blood lead level from 5.0 ug/dl to 3.5 ug/ dl noting that there really is no safe blood lead level.
- Yeadon ranks 4th in Municipalities in Delaware County with highest number of children with elevated blood lead levels above 3.5ug/dl the CDC standard.
- In Delaware County, African American children accounted for 31.21 % of children tested and accounted for 49.65% of confirmed elevated cases in Delaware County. While white children accounted for 39.69% of children tested and 18.40% of confirmed elevated cases. Which means while African American children had less children tested; they accounted for a higher percentage of the cases.

The Delaware County Lead Poisoning Prevention Coalition and The Delaware County Health Department have been working hard to raise awareness of the childhood lead poisoning in Delaware County. In 2022 a conference was held at Widener and the 5-year action plan was unveiled. Copies of which are available on the Children First website. The key goals are

- Remove Lead Paint Hazards out of homes.
- Ensure all Children are tested for Lead and improve their health outcomes.
- Communicate Effectively with county stakeholders about Lead poisoning prevention, treatment and resources.
- Secure sustainable funding for Lead Prevention, intervention and remediation activities.

I am happy to report that progress is being made in all these areas and the passing of the home prevention ordinance by Yeadon Borough is another step towards preventing children from being poisoned and suffering the long-term consequences from lead poisoning which is totally preventable!

Delaware County Health Department and the County office of Housing has obtained a grant from HUD that will help repair homes impacted by lead. Usually that involves windows, doors and high friction areas in the home. The PADOH also has a home testing company that can test your home for lead if your child test positive, The Delaware County Action Agency also provides resources for lead remediation. Delaware County has many resources and information available so Contact the Delaware County Health Department for more information at 484 - 276-2100.

Time and Time again as I have worked on childhood lead poisoning over the years I have heard from families devastated by having a lead poisoned child. I repeatedly hear that if they had only known about lead they would have had their child tested and had their home tested. They are angry and frustrated that their child will suffer from something that was totally preventable! So, thank you Rafi Cave for spear heading this initiative and to the mayor and council for voting to pass this important health and safety ordinance in your community.