

Legislation Text

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Recognizing October 22-28, 2017 as Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Lead poisoning is a chronic public health issue in the City of Philadelphia. Though rates of elevated blood lead concentration have fallen dramatically among the City's children over the past decade, rates still remain higher than the national average. Between 2006 and 2016, rates of elevated blood lead fell from 11.2% to 3.4% in Philadelphia; the national average rate of exposure to lead among children aged one through five is 1.6%; and

WHEREAS, Lead exposure during childhood is particularly risky and can result in number of health and behavioral complications for children who are exposed to dangerous amounts of lead. Heightened blood levels of lead are known to cause slowing of growth and development, behavioral problems, difficulty learning and paying attention in school, and damage to hearing and speech abilities, which are irreversible. Long term, lead poisoning can damage the nervous and cardiovascular systems and have an impact on reproductive health; and

WHEREAS, Homes built before 1978 are most conducive to lead poisoning, as the national ban on lead-based paints went into effect that year. An estimated 95% of housing units in Philadelphia were built before 1978, while the national average is 54% of units. The most critical source of lead exposure among children in Philadelphia is dust or flakes from old paint; and

WHEREAS, In the United States, children of low socioeconomic status and African American children are more likely than other groups to be at risk of dangerous lead exposure. The most indicative factor of lead exposure is a child's home, which is more likely to contain dangerous levels of lead if it has not been properly inspected or remediated; and

WHEREAS, Members of this Body have taken affirmative steps to address the issue of lead poisoning in the City. In 2010, City Council worked closely with homeowners, lead specialists and experts and advocates from nonprofit organizations like Public Citizens for Children and Youth to tackle the issue of lead paint in rented properties. The resulting legislation, signed into law in 2011, compels landlords to disclose the presence of lead paint in their properties. The Ordinance requires properties to be certified lead free or lead safe before they are rented to tenants with children under six years old, and enforces the tenant's right to information regarding lead in the home; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenney convened the Philadelphia Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Advisory Group in 2016, which consisted of healthcare providers, City and state representatives, property owners, and other stakeholders. The Group was charged with developing a final set of recommendations aimed at addressing the chronic issue of lead, and meeting the goals of Mayor Kenney's "Lead Free Kids" plan; and

WHEREAS, The Advisory Group published its full set of recommendations on June 20, 2017, which include, but are not limited to: lead education initiatives, additional training for lead inspectors, review and more diligent enforcement of the Lead Paint Disclosure Law, and identifying healthcare providers that should increase their rates of lead screening among children; and

WHEREAS, Lead poisoning is preventable, and officials of the City of Philadelphia have taken actionable steps to tackle this public health crisis. While lead blood concentrations among children in Philadelphia have fallen over the past decade, the City must remain diligent to protect children from its physical and mental health impacts long-term; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize October 22 -28, 2017 as Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in the City of Philadelphia.