



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAACP partners with City of Indianapolis and Marion County Health Department to launch Lead Testing Initiative

INDIANAPOLIS, Sept 26, 2019—According to the Center for Disease Control, any blood level of lead detected in a child is unsafe. As a result, The Greater Indianapolis NAACP Branch #3053 is partnering with the City of Indianapolis and the Marion County Public Health Department to launch a community-wide lead testing initiative in Marion County.

The Lead Testing Initiative will offer free testing to students in kindergarten and first grade at the Mayor's Charter Schools, Indianapolis Public Schools and the Metropolitan School District of Pike Township.

According to Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett, the Marion County Public Health Department will be at selected charter schools during designated times and dates for voluntary testing beginning this month. See schedule below.

Parents will be given a consent form to fill out in advance. If parents agree to having their child tested, health department staff will take a blood sample from the child by simply pricking their skin. Children with an elevated lead level and their families will receive further assistance from the health department to identify the source of the lead and eliminate it from the child's environment.

The testing initiative began after the NAACP received a lead water report conducted by the Marion County Public Health Department. The report showed alarming levels of lead and copper in water fountains and sinks in many school districts.

According to the Marion County Public Health Department, young children, especially under the age of seven, are the most susceptible to the irreversible effects of lead poisoning. Lead is a toxic metal that can cause damage in a developing brain and other vital organs including the kidneys and liver.

“Lead is a toxic metal that can cause serious damage to a child's developing brain,” said Virginia A. Caine, M.D., director of the Marion County Public Health Department. “Children can be exposed to lead primarily from paint and dust in homes built before 1978.

Other sources include drinking water pumped through lead pipes, contaminated soil, and some consumer products.”

“The main way to test for lead is by collecting a small amount of blood through a skin prick,” said Karla Johnson, administrator of Healthy Homes and Senior Care Management at the Marion County Public Health Department. “This is vital for a child’s health and success in school. Children with elevated lead levels will receive further assistance from the health department.

“We know that children exposed to lead can have difficulty paying attention, learning to read and following classroom rules,” IPS Board of School Commissioners member Elizabeth Gore said in the release. “If possible, children should be tested as toddlers—long before they’re in an IPS classroom.”

“This is why it is imperative that as a community we work together to address any lead levels detected in our children and eliminate the concerns,” says Chrystal Ratcliffe, president of the Greater Indianapolis NAACP Branch #3053.

“I encourage all parents to say yes to lead testing because it can help ensure a healthy and successful future for your child,” said Mayor Hogsett.

Mayor Hogsett has recorded a public service announcement about this initiative that can be found at this link:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1xSxZE8IQ5fnqu0cvFGiYSkgTD_CqBKek

Testing Schedule Mayor’s Authorized Charters

<u>Tindley Genesis Academy</u>	<u>Wednesday, August 28, 2019</u>
<u>Tindley Submit Academy</u>	<u>Wednesday, October 2, 2019</u>
<u>Paramount Brookside</u>	<u>Tuesday, October 3, 2019</u>
<u>Global Prep Academy</u>	<u>Monday, October 7, 2019</u>
<u>Vision Academy</u>	<u>Monday, October 7, 2019</u>
<u>Paramount Community Heights</u>	<u>Wednesday, October 9, 2019</u>
<u>Ignite Achievement Academy</u>	<u>Thursday, October 10, 2019</u>
<u>Indiana Math and Science Academy North</u>	<u>Monday, October 21, 2019</u>
<u>KIPP Unite</u>	<u>Wednesday, October 23, 2019</u>
<u>Indiana Math and Science Academy West</u>	<u>Thursday, October 24, 2019</u>

MORE

<u>Urban Act Academy</u>	<u>Monday, October 28, 2019</u>
<u>Christel House South</u>	<u>Wednesday, October 30, 2019</u>
<u>Irvington Community Elementary</u>	<u>Monday, November 4, 2019</u>
<u>Kindezi Academy</u>	<u>Monday, November 4, 2019</u>
<u>Enlace Academy</u>	<u>Wednesday, November 6, 2019</u>
<u>Match book</u>	<u>Thursday, November 7, 2019</u>
<u>Sense Charter School</u>	<u>Thursday, November 7, 2019</u>
<u>PilotED</u>	<u>Monday, November 11, 2019</u>
<u>Avondale Meadows Academy</u>	<u>Tuesday, November 12, 2019</u>
<u>Damar School</u>	<u>Wednesday, November 13, 2019</u>
<u>Indianapolis Lighthouse</u>	<u>Wednesday, November 13, 2019</u>
<u>Christel House West</u>	<u>Thursday, November 14, 2019</u>

IPS and Pike Township Schools: To Be Announced 2020