

Lead Poisoning Prevention Commission 2025 Annual Report

Environment Article Section 6-810(c)

Lead Poisoning Prevention Commission
Maryland Department of the Environment

April 3, 2026



STATE OF MARYLAND Lead Poisoning Prevention Commission

April 3, 2026

The Honorable Wes Moore
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President
Senate of Maryland
State House, H-107
Annapolis Maryland 21401

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Speaker
Maryland House of Delegates
State House, H-101
Annapolis Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Pena-Melnyk:

On behalf of the Maryland Lead Poisoning Prevention Commission (Commission), please accept this letter as the Commission's Annual Report for calendar year 2025, as required by Environment Article, § 6-810(c), Annotated Code of Maryland. The Commission, established under Environment Article Title 6, Subtitle 8, advises the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the legislature, and the Governor regarding lead poisoning prevention in Maryland and specifically the Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing Law.

During the 2025 Legislative Session, the Commission reviewed, discussed, and monitored several bills related to lead poisoning prevention and housing regulation. All of the bills supported by the Commission were ultimately passed and approved by the Governor.

Senate Bill 250, Department of the Environment – Fees, Penalties, Funding, and Regulation

Proposed increasing rental property registration fees and extending the registration cycle from annual to biennial. The Commission determined the bill would provide additional support for MDE while updating fee structures for rental property owners. The Commission voted to support the legislation and submitted a Letter of Support.

SB321 / HB0352, Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Incorporated provisions from SB250, resulting in a \$7.50 annual increase in rental property registry fees. The Commission emphasized the importance of lead registries in supporting program funding and regulatory oversight.

Senate Bill 238 / House Bill 127, Maryland Housing Rehabilitation Program – Local Rehabilitation Program Administration

Proposed expanding the number of agencies eligible to administer lead hazard control and other rehabilitation programs statewide, allowing nonprofit organizations to serve as subrecipients alongside local governments.

House Bill 1367, Lead Testing and Inspections – Falsifying Information – Penalty

Proposed enhanced penalties for professionals who falsify lead testing or inspection documentation, addressing potential safety risks from invalid certifications.

During the 2025 Reporting Period, the Commission meetings included the following Updates:

Updates on Lead Testing Drinking Water in Schools

Tim Rule, MDE’s Division Chief for the Water Supply Administration (WSA), provided an overview of lead testing in public and nonpublic school drinking water. The presentation covered statutory background, program applicability, sampling and testing requirements, procedures for addressing elevated lead levels, and MDE’s review of results. Validated data as of January 8, 2025, and school-reported testing outcomes were summarized.

Lead Inspection Contractor Investigation: Green Environmental LLC and Rodney Barkley

Representatives from MDE and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) presented findings from an investigation into lead paint inspection service providers Green Environmental LLC and its owner, Rodney Barkley. The investigation revealed the use of unlicensed testing equipment, failure to submit required project notifications, and the issuance of lead-free inspection certificates that failed to meet standards. In addition to failing to notify MDE of inspections and using unlicensed equipment, MDE identified lead-based paint in properties that were issued lead-free certificates. Consequently, over 1,400 lead-free certificates were invalidated by MDE. MDE notified property owners and tenants accordingly. As a result of these investigations, MDE issued a formal Complaint, which suspended on an emergency basis Green Environmental, LLC and Rodney Barkley’s accreditation in Maryland. Additional actions included impounding equipment and the filing of a lawsuit seeking penalties against Green Environmental, LLC, and Rodney Barkley. MDE also notified other states and territories, including Washington DC, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Virginia of the existing investigations. Public information on lead rental certification and accreditation remains available through MDE resources. A criminal investigation into Mr. Barkley’s actions as an inspector was conducted by the Maryland Office of the Attorney General’s Environmental and Natural Resources Crimes Unit (ENRCU) after a referral from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Criminal charges were filed against Mr. Barkley, and he pleaded guilty in October 2025 in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City to four counts of Falsifying a Lead Paint Risk Reduction Certificate and one count of Operating a Radiation Machine Without Obtaining a License. He was sentenced to 5 years incarceration, all suspended, and 2 years of supervised probation.

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development: Healthy Homes and Special Loans Programs

Commissioner Nicola Tran, Director of Housing and Building Energy Programs for the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MD-DHCD) presented on the Healthy Homes Production Grant and the Special Loan Program administered by the MD-DHCD. The programs rehabilitate single-family, owner-occupied homes, supporting lead hazard reduction and safe, code-compliant housing statewide. The presentation included an overview of SLP sub-programs, the Maryland Housing Rehabilitation Program, lead hazard reduction grants and loans, Healthy Homes for Healthy Kids, application procedures, and anticipated new programs.

The Lead Commission has encouraged Maryland DHCD to seek additional federal funding to supplement state Special Loans Program funding for lead hazard remediation and other housing intervention programs. Maryland DHCD received a new grant in 2025 that it successfully applied for and was awarded by HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes. Maryland DHCD is implementing a \$4,000,000 Lead Hazard Reduction Grant to conduct lead hazard reduction interventions in pre-1978 homes in Maryland.

Federal Support Changes and Funding Restoration

Commissioners discussed potential impacts of federal staffing reductions at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and program changes at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on lead poisoning prevention efforts. Chair Norton highlighted positive developments in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) funding for home repair and lead hazard control while acknowledging CDC programs are recovering and clarifying operational scope.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Strategies

Commissioners discussed strategies to expand lead poisoning prevention efforts to daycare centers, schools, and owner-occupied housing. Topics included legislative proposals for tracking pre-1978 properties, voluntary registration programs, and targeted education initiatives. Emphasis was on balancing public health protections with potential financial impacts. The Commission established a special meeting to provide guidance on inspection procedures and outreach. It was emphasized during the meeting that more needed to be done to better communicate between the regulators and the regulated community.

Evaluation of Interventions and Universal Lead Testing

Commissioner Barbara Moore, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner at Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital (MWPH) highlighted the need to assess the effectiveness of current interventions, review resource allocation, and consider national best practices. Commissioner Dr. Mitchell described the transition from targeted to statewide testing for children at 12 and 24 months, with at least one test required before age six, and documentation requirements for childcare and school enrollment. Commissioner Dr. Michael Ichniowski from the Maryland Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) emphasized the importance of early detection to mitigate developmental risks. Commissioners discussed potential testing gaps between ages two and six, with clarifications on coverage for school enrollment. Commissioners considered potential missed elevations in children between ages two and six, the impact of residential changes, and the use of finger-stick testing to expand screening.

Addressing Gaps in Lead Testing, Adult Exposure, and Outreach

The Commission also reviewed the effects of lead exposure on adolescents and adults, including cardiovascular, renal, and hypertensive outcomes, particularly in black communities. Strategies to improve public awareness included social media campaigns, educational videos for pregnant individuals, and addressing barriers to testing in clinical settings.

Updates on Federal Programs and Local Environmental Impacts

Chair Norton reported that CDC lead programs have resumed, and the EPA reaffirmed lead poisoning prevention as a high priority. She highlighted the ongoing impact of Western Maryland floods, including exacerbated lead hazards in affected homes, and described a coordinated community response scheduled for September 22–26, 2025

Lead Poisoning Prevention Awareness Week (October 19–25, 2025)

The Commission actively supported planning and implementation of National Lead Poisoning Prevention Awareness Week, held October 19–25, 2025, recognizing its importance in advancing statewide and national lead prevention efforts. Early discussions emphasized aligning Lead Week activities with broader strategic priorities and national initiatives. Outreach and Education staff from GHHI and MDE presented a coordinated schedule of events designed to engage property owners, tenants, parents, guardians, and communities, including educational webinars, community canvassing, tenant education sessions, resource fairs, and lead testing initiatives. Chair Norton encouraged broad collaboration with local agencies and highlighted the importance of promoting available resources such as the Just Communities program and MD-DHCD home repair grants. Planned activities included school-based education, property owner trainings, community “Lunch and Learn” events, family-focused outreach, blood lead testing clinics, and a national webinar featuring the New Jersey Department of Health and Rutgers University on prenatal and perinatal lead and mercury screening, underscoring the Commission’s commitment to education, prevention, and cross-state learning.

Baltimore City Lead Grant and MDH Lead Programs

Katherine Taylor, Program Director of the Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development (BC-DHCD), reported that operations continued despite the federal shutdown, with HUD maintaining essential staff. Under the new grant, four units were completed, six are scheduled, and seven are under obligation. Outreach has generated over 100 applications and increased social media engagement. Chair Norton requested monthly dashboard reports tracking applications and completed units.

Maryland Department of Health: Healthy Homes

Theo Williams, Healthy Homes Program Administrator for Maryland Department of Health (MDH), reported that the home visiting program for children with elevated blood lead levels and asthma currently tracks approximately 500 children for lead poisoning, with funding of \$4.5 million fully allocated for the current fiscal year (FY26). Commissioner Dr. Mitchell noted that approximately \$880,000 in the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) funding has been provided over the past three fiscal years (FY23-FY25) to support lead case management in 13 jurisdictions not covered by Medicaid CHIP. Additional Lead Care 2 devices were distributed to enhance screening in Allegany and Garrett counties.

Strengthening Lead Investigation Practices and Oversight of Lead-Free Certification

Commissioner Susan Kleinhammer, President of Leadtec Services, Inc. (LSI) presented the need to strengthen and better align Maryland's lead investigation and certification systems to support evolving public health standards. Commissioner Kleinhammer highlighted discrepancies between current regulations requiring full HUD Chapter 16 Lead Risk Assessments and investigative practices that often focus narrowly on paint, noting that as blood lead level thresholds continue to decrease, more comprehensive source investigations are increasingly necessary. Commissioner Kleinhammer also encouraged the continued efforts needed for MDE to continue performing oversight of lead-free certificates but according to current COMAR regulations, citing the large number of invalidations in recent investigations. Commissioner Kleinhammer also strategically presented on the impacts of certificate invalidations, including increased costs, tight reinspection timelines for occupied units, risks to residents, and unintended pressure on housing affordability when costs are passed to tenants. A recommendation was made to create a housing-focused subcommittee to bring regulators, property owners, and other stakeholders together to develop coordinated, practical solutions.

Elevated Blood Lead Level Case Management and Environmental Investigation

Elevated Blood Lead Level Case Management and Environmental Investigation - The Lead Commission reviewed and discussed with MDE and MDH the state's planning for and current implementation of the lead case management and environmental investigation processes at the lower blood lead reference level of 3.5 µg/dl in Maryland. The State of Maryland passed legislation (HB1110) in 2022 that adopted the Center for Disease Control's new blood lead reference level and lowered the state's public health and environmental intervention response level from 5.0 µg/dl to 3.5 µg/dl for children with elevated blood levels through a staggered implementation schedule.

Strategic Planning

Early in the year, Commissioners engaged in preparatory discussions to define goals, identify recurring challenges, and gather input through a pre-planning survey. This work culminated in a Strategic Planning Day held on June 24, 2025, which included presentations from MDE and MDH on the current status of childhood lead poisoning, followed by facilitated discussions on strengthening prevention, enforcement, education, and long-term sustainability of lead abatement efforts. Key themes that emerged included the need to reinforce enforcement of the regulated community, expand education and outreach resources, address equity in lead exposure, and plan proactively amid funding uncertainty. Following the planning session, the Commission moved to formalize next steps by proposing clear short- and long-term priorities, exploring the re-establishment of working committees to support focused implementation, and initiating the drafting of concrete recommendations with defined timeframes. This strategic planning effort reflects the Commission's commitment to moving beyond reporting activities toward coordinated, outcome-driven action to protect Maryland residents from lead exposure.

The 2025 meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes may be found on the Commission website:

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Land/LeadPoisoningPrevention/Pages/LPPCommission.aspx>

During the 2025 Reporting Period, the Commission formally recognized notable achievements by partner agencies that advanced Maryland's lead and healthy homes efforts.

At its January meeting, the Commission acknowledged the MD-DHCD for securing a \$2 million Healthy Homes Production Grant, supporting expanded housing interventions to reduce environmental health risks. At the March meeting, the Commission recognized the MDE's Lead Program for receiving an award from the University of Baltimore's Schaefer Center for Public Policy, honoring the program's commitment to mentoring student interns and its leadership in cultivating the next generation of public service professionals.

During the 20205 Reporting Period, the Commission meetings included the following Administration/Agency Updates:

Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)

Throughout the 2025 reporting period, MDE focused on strengthening the state's lead poisoning prevention infrastructure through workforce development, interagency coordination, and regulatory updates. MDE prioritized recruiting and training inspectors, including hosting regional workshops and contractor training to improve capacity and consistency across jurisdictions. The Department worked closely with MDH and local health departments to enhance outreach, case management for lead-exposed children, and community education, particularly in high-risk areas such as Howard County and Baltimore City. MDE also advanced system improvements, including training local health departments on the Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Surveillance System (HHPSS) software to streamline communication. In addition, the department implemented regulatory and fee updates related to lead-free certification and rental property registration, reinforcing program sustainability while continuing to notify and support affected property owners and tenants.

Maryland Department of Health (MDH)

During 2025, MDH advanced its leadership role in lead case management, data-driven planning, and coordination with state and local partners. MDH evaluated its home visiting programs, working closely with Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) partners amid ongoing funding challenges, while continuing to support nurses and lead case managers statewide. The Department secured time-limited State and Territory Health Officials (ASTHO) funding to support lead case management in non-Medicaid CHIP jurisdictions and facilitated discussions among local health departments to address complex cases and share best practices. MDH also collaborated closely with MDE and local jurisdictions to analyze population-level risks, refine lead testing strategies, and strengthen case management systems for lead-exposed children and families, ensuring a coordinated public health response.

Maryland Chapter Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP)

MDAAP played a key role in advancing pediatric lead poisoning prevention through policy advocacy, provider engagement, and public education. Building on its successful advocacy for Rudy's Law, MDAAP supported implementation of new requirements for testing baby food for heavy metals, with phased-in manufacturer testing and consumer transparency measures beginning in 2025. Throughout the year, MDAAP worked with Commission leadership to raise awareness among pediatric providers about lead exposure, programmatic changes, and available resources. The chapter also committed to using professional meetings and social media outreach, including short educational videos, to encourage lead testing and equip pediatricians with consistent messaging to support early detection and prevention.

Maryland State Department of Education / Office of Child Care (MSDE/OCC)

In 2025, MSDE/OCC focused on clarifying and supporting lead-related requirements in early childhood and childcare facilities. MSDE worked with MDE to align water testing protocols for eligible preschool and nursery programs and advanced formal guidance. The MSDE/OCC also assisted childcare providers in navigating lead testing requirements for children, including those entering Maryland from other states. Commissioners noted growing concerns among immigrant families about accessing testing and medical care, highlighting the need for culturally responsive outreach and reassurance to ensure children receive appropriate screening and services.

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MD-DHCD)

MD-DHCD worked to expand housing-based lead and healthy homes interventions during the reporting period. The Department secured a \$2 million Healthy Homes Production Grant and a \$4,000,000 Lead Hazard Reduction Grant. MD-DHCD worked to assess potential federal funding impacts while onboarding local nonprofit partners and maintaining service delivery under existing programs. The Department also advanced coordination through the Green and Healthy Homes Task Force and prepared for future energy efficiency and housing improvement programs, with targeted outreach efforts to ensure eligible households are informed and able to participate.

Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD)

Throughout 2025, the BCHD strengthened its lead poisoning prevention efforts through expanded outreach, staffing increase, and community partnerships. BCHD focused on lead testing and education initiatives in collaboration with healthcare and community partners, with particular attention to high-risk neighborhoods and underserved populations. The Department faced workforce challenges, including recruitment of environmental sanitarians, while continuing to invest in training and cross-disciplinary capacity building. BCHD also expanded public engagement through resource fairs, media partnerships, and bilingual outreach, including Lead Poisoning Prevention Week activities featuring testing clinics and community events. Leadership transitions and new hires positioned the Department to sustain and grow its lead prevention and education efforts moving forward.

Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development(BC-DHCD)

During 2025 , BC-DHCD focused on maintaining continuity in lead hazard reduction services while transitioning between federal grant cycles. The Department completed negotiations for a new citywide grant and initiated implementation activities, including unit enrollment and outreach planning. At the same time, BC-DHCD worked to close out a prior award and conducted targeted outreach to properties affected by MDE enforcement to ensure compliance and protection for residents. These efforts supported Baltimore City's broader goal of reducing lead hazards while maintaining affordable rental housing .

Young Gifted & Green (YGG)

Young Gifted & Green advanced community-based lead prevention through targeted advocacy and direct engagement with residents. In 2025, YGG resumed door-to-door canvassing to support lead service line inventory work, prioritizing neighborhoods affected by construction activity and known lead risks. The organization conducted scratch tests, educated residents, and helped identify homes potentially impacted by lead-related enforcement, connecting households to additional resources when needed. YGG's work emphasized proactive notification, transparency, and resident empowerment, reinforcing the importance of grassroots engagement in statewide lead prevention efforts.

Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI)

GHHI played a central role in outreach, education, and advocacy during the 2025 reporting period. GHHI implemented tenant-focused lead education and outreach, legal services, expanded staffing, and delivered training for property owners, tenants, and community members on lead laws and healthy homes practices. GHHI was awarded funding through a competitive bid process to facilitate lead poisoning prevention outreach and technical assistance throughout Maryland. GHHI facilitated and led or supported numerous public engagement activities, including National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, Healthy Homes Month, school and community center tours, asthma awareness initiatives, and the statewide Asthma Summit. GHHI disseminated thousands of new and improved brochures and info cards on Lead Poisoning Prevention and Legal Resources in multiple languages to community-based organizations, all local health departments, Head Start programs, Judy Centers, and community schools. Each resource connects tenants to interactive digital supports, such as LinkTree resource hubs and virtual compliance checklists, ensuring accessible guidance to promote self-advocacy. GHHI also served as a convener, coordinating advocacy discussions and distributing resources at large public events to raise awareness of lead hazards, available grants, and tenant protections, reaching thousands of Maryland residents.

We appreciate the opportunity to update you on the Commission's work over the past year. We look forward to continuing our work in 2025 to further the Commission's vision of a Maryland in which all children are protected from the harmful effects of lead exposure.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

Ruth Ann Norton

6171FEFD32CD49A...

Ruth Ann Norton
Chair

Enclosed Addendum