

Community-Based Strategy to Improve Lead (Pb) Screening for Low-Income Neighborhoods in Chicago, Illinois



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In 2003, only 37% of the children under the age of 6 in South Shore, a community located in the Southern Region of Chicago have been tested for blood lead level. Of the 2700 children tested in South Shore, 230 had elevated blood levels of lead. At this time there is limited outreach to communities to inform, promote lead screening or lead poisoning prevention. In the summer of 2008 Urban Sustain's strategy to improve South Shore's screening of lead is to create a community-based collaborative partnership to develop a one day symposium.

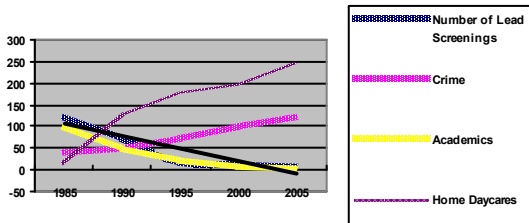
Problem Statement:

Within Chicago despite the aggressive approach of the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) to lead screening. The CDPH mandates that all Chicago children be considered high risk and be tested beginning at 6 months of age as per the physicians guidelines established in 1999. The average age for the first test is around two years. 80% of first EBLs are identified by age three. Often, children are poisoned when they are one or two years old and by the time they're about to enter school, when the blood lead test is done, their blood lead levels have begun to decline. On average, 63% of the children in the high risk area are not being properly screened for blood lead levels.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Program Goal -
"Increase the number of children Lead screening under the age of 3 in South Shore "a working poor neighborhood"
Outcome Objective -
Early detection of high lead levels to improve crime statistics, a child's educational experience and reduce the physiological effects of caused by the lead.

High-Risk Lead Neighborhoods Behavior Over Time Graph:



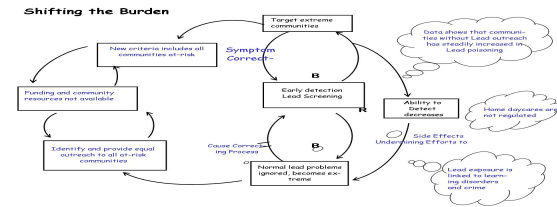
Lead poisoning can cause irreversible brain damage and can impair mental functioning. Lead is most harmful to children younger than six years old because their bodies are still developing.

What is called genius is the abundance of life and health.
HENRY DAVID THOREAU



What is the impact of Lead poisoning on the urban educational and criminal system?

Causal Loop Diagrams and applicable archetypes:



4 of 10 Essential Environmental Health

Services:

Inform, Educate & Empower - Guided by a "participatory research" framework that calls for the active involvement of ordinary people in the target community in the collective assessment/investigation of the reality related to Lead poisoning in order to transform it.

Develop Policies - As the project develops barriers and accomplishments will documented and reported to the Lead Safe Illinois Taskforce to build a better infrastructure and programs between the community and academia.

Enforce Laws - The Chicago Department of Public Health also mandates that all Chicago children considered high risk are tested beginning at 6 months of age as per the physicians guidelines established in 1999.

Mobilize Community Partnerships - Community volunteers will identify community volunteers/stakeholders, needs, inventory assets and assess the capacity for lead screening improvement.

National Goals Supported - CDC Health Protection Goals

Healthy People in Every Stage of Life

Prevent chronic diseases and their consequences among children. Increase the number of children who live, learn, and play in social and physical environments that are accessible, that support health, safety and development, and that promote healthy behaviors.

National Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Public Health Services

Build Capacity
Strengthen and support environmental public health services at the community, local, state and federal level.
Communicate and Market
Improve communication and information sharing among environmental public health agencies, communities, strategic partners, and other stakeholders and better market environmental public health services to policy makers and the public.

Create Strategic Partnerships

Foster interaction among agencies, organizations, and interests that influence environmental public health services.

Next Steps:

- Have community meetings to gauge the interest and knowledge.
- Distribute the information to all that are affected in these communities.
- Build community collaborative
- Provide a one day event with seminars, blood screenings and workshops.
- Secure funding for symposium.
- Invite the residents; home and institutional day care providers, social workers, health educators, politicians, local school administrators and medical providers to attend.