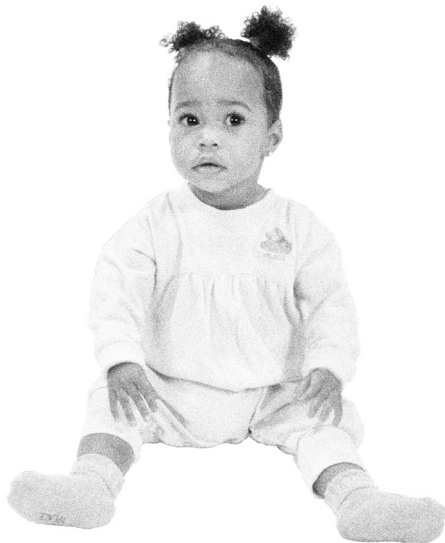




TX CLPPP News

vol. 6, issue 2

Summer 2008



Increasing Blood Lead Screening & Testing Rates in Texas Children

Over the last three decades, blood lead levels in U.S. children have decreased substantially, primarily due to federal and state regulations enacted to reduce the distribution of lead into the environment. Although the reduction in blood lead levels has been a major success story, many Texas children continue to be exposed to lead.

The only true way to know if a child has a high lead level is through blood lead testing. The Texas Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (TX CLPPP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Regional and Local Health Departments; and Texas healthcare providers are collaborating to increase screening and testing rates and to eliminate childhood lead poisoning.

To accomplish this formidable task, TX CLPPP implemented new screening and testing guidelines on April 1, 2008, (see page 5-6, *Blood Lead Screening and Testing Guidelines for Texas Children*).

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**Please Complete
Survey on Page 7**

**Important
Survey Inside**

Lead Screening in Texas, Background

In 1998, we gathered a group of interested parties to assist in developing a screening plan for Texas children. This became the Screening Advisory Group (SAG). The SAG reviewed surveillance data for Texas children and held hearings throughout the state to elicit input about what plan Texas should adopt.

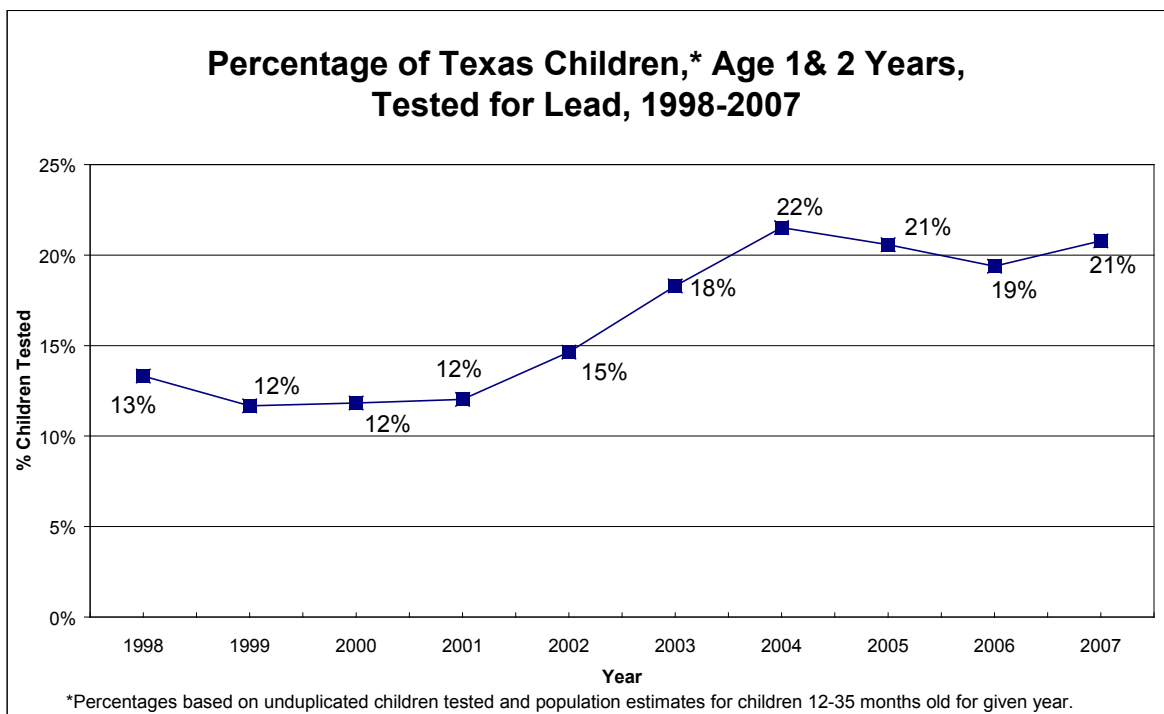


2000 Blood Lead Screening Guidelines

In 2000, we implemented the first blood lead screening guideline for Texas children following Medicaid requirements to test all children at 12 and 24 months of age.

The SAG also recommended that DSHS change the reporting requirement from only reporting elevated blood levels to the reporting of all blood lead results. This change became effective in June 2003.

We disseminated the Screening Guideline to health care providers and as noted in the chart below, *Percentage of Texas Children, *Age 1 & 2 Years, Tested for Lead, 1998-2006*, blood lead testing increased through 2004. The percentage of children tested declined in 2006, likely due to population growth; the number of children in this age range almost tripled. In 2007, the percent of children tested in the 12 to 35 month of age range, again began to increase.



2008 Blood Lead Screening Guidelines

In December 2006, the SAG began revising the guidelines to target high-risk areas. The SAG reviewed available surveillance and census data to identify high-risk populations. Following CDC recommendations, the following criteria was used to identify target areas:

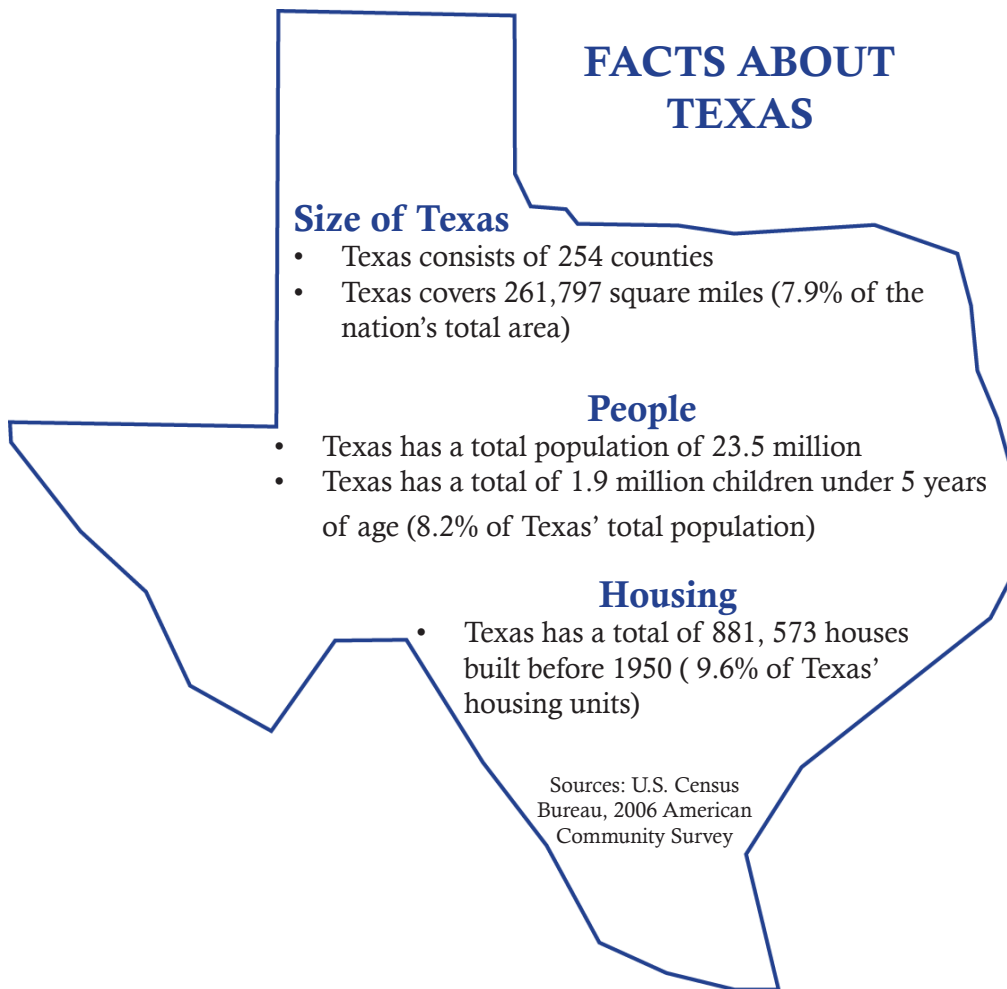
- 27% of the housing units were built before 1950, and
- 3% or more of children age 12 to 35 months have elevated blood lead levels.

While the SAG considered using census tracts as the geographic boundaries, they recognized the difficulty a healthcare provider might have associating a child's address with a census tract. Instead, the SAG decided to use zip codes to identify the high-risk areas. The 2008 screening and testing guidelines list zip codes that contain one or more census tracts of high-risk populations.

Using zip codes as a method to identify high-risk children has limitations. Census tracts are located within a single county, while zip codes may exist in multiple census tracts, counties, or cities. Until we can identify a better method to target high-risk children, the guidelines will use zip codes to identify targeted high-risk areas for blood lead testing.

Effective April 1, 2008, we posted the new *Screening and Testing Guidelines for Texas Children: Quick Reference Guide* (see page 5-6) on our web page at www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead. In addition, we distributed the Quick Reference Guide to Texas healthcare providers.

TX CLPPP and the SAG will continue to monitor the success of the new screening plan, and make amendments as necessary.



Invalid Tests, Contaminated Results, & Blood Collection Methods

In 2007, TX CLPPP received approximately 21,000 invalid blood lead tests results because of the following:

- Clotted specimen
- Insufficient quantity
- Other (decomposed, broken specimen container, missing patient identification)

Many providers prefer to take a capillary sample because it is less time consuming and may be less traumatic for the child. The majority of the 21, 000 invalid blood lead tests were from capillary specimens.

In addition, we received a number of very high-elevated results that appear to have occurred because of improper collection techniques. This false reading appears to be elevated due to contamination of the specimen.

Both type of specimens, invalid and contaminated results, result in the need for an additional blood lead test to verify the result. Valuable staff time is needed to recall the patient and redo the test. In addition, to using staff time, it inconveniences the parent and

child by requiring them to make a trip back to the clinic for a repeat of the blood draw.

Venipuncture has the lowest risk of contamination. It provides a larger volume for analysis and is less prone to clotting and the other problems encountered with capillary specimens. When following best practices, venipuncture is the preferred specimen collection method.

TXCLPPP and the DSHS Laboratory designed a poster entitled *Childhood Blood Lead Testing: Getting a Good Specimen* to provide healthcare providers with information on proper blood collection methods. The poster is available on the TX CLPPPs website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead. If you do not have access to the internet, call 1-800-588-1248, and we will mail a copy to you.

Capillary and venipuncture are the two methods used to collect blood lead specimens. Both specimen types use different blood collection tubes. You may request venipuncture supplies to retest children with elevated blood lead levels. To order supplies from the DSHS Laboratory call: Toll Free: 1-888-963-7111 ext. 7661.

To order blood collection supplies for **VENOUS OR CAPILLARY specimens call the DSHS Laboratory:**

Toll Free: 1-888-963-7111 ext. 7661

To order *Childhood Blood Lead Testing: Getting a Good Specimen*, go to: www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead

OR

call Toll Free: 1-800-588-1248

Blood Lead Screening and Testing Guidelines for Texas Children: Quick Reference Guide

- Blood lead testing is the only way to identify a child with an elevated lead level.
- Please remember that most children may not have symptoms.
- An elevated blood lead level is 10 mcg/dL or greater.
- State law requires reporting all blood lead results to the address below.

Determinant	Action	When
1. Currently enrolled in Medicaid/Texas Health Steps	Blood lead test ----- Complete Risk Assessment for Lead Exposure Questionnaire, Form Pb-110	12 and 24 months, or Ages 3-6 if never tested ----- Age 6, 9, 15, 18 months, and Age 3, 4, 5, 6 years
2. Resides in target area (see page 2)	Blood lead test	Age 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 years
3. Newly arrived refugee or foreign adoptee	Venous blood lead test	Within 3 months of arrival in the USA, and Re-test at 2 and 6 months after the initial test
4. Resides in a household or has contact with an individual with an elevated blood lead level	Blood lead test	Immediately
5. Invalid Test Result – Clotted or Insufficient Quantity	Venous blood lead re-test	Immediately
6. Elevated capillary blood lead result 10 mcg/dL or greater	Venous blood lead test	Follow <i>Schedule for Obtaining a Diagnostic Venous Sample</i> (see bottom of page or Form Pb-109)
7. Parent expresses concern or requests their child be tested	Blood lead test	Immediately
8. Has been tested for Lead, but no previous record of elevated blood lead test	Complete Risk Assessment for Lead Exposure Questionnaire, Form Pb-110	Age 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24 months, and Age 3, 4, 5, 6 years
9. "YES" or "DON'T KNOW" answer on any question on a lead questionnaire such as the Risk Assessment for Lead Exposure Questionnaire, Form Pb-110	Blood lead test	Immediately

Note: The Pb-109, Pb-110, and other TX CLPPP forms are available at:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead>

Schedule for Obtaining a Diagnostic Venous Sample

Capillary Screening Test results (mcg/dL):	Perform a venous diagnostic test within:
10-44	1 week - 4 weeks*
45-59	48 hours
60-69	24 hours
70 and up	Immediately as an emergency lab test

*The higher the Blood Lead Level (BLL) on the screening test, the more urgent the need for diagnostic testing

Effective 04-01-2008



For more information & reporting, contact TX CLPPP at:
Texas Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
Epidemiology & Disease Surveillance Unit
Texas Department of State Health Services
PO BOX 149347 • Austin, TX 78714-9347
1-800-588-1248
www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead

Targeted Areas by Zip Code

75020 , 75021, 75040, 75042, 75050, 75051, 75053, 75060, 75061, 75090, 75091	cont.- 76458 , 76459, 76460, 76462, 76463, 76464, 76465, 76469, 76470, 76471, 76472, 76475, 76476, 76483, 76484, 76486, 76491	77619 , 77622, 77627, 77630, 77631, 77632, 77640, 77641, 77642, 77643, 77651, 77655, 77662, 77665	79001 , 79002, 79003, 79005, 79007, 79008, 79010, 79011, 79014, 79015, 79018, 79019, 79021, 79022, 79027, 79029, 79031, 79033, 79034, 79039, 79040, 79041, 79042, 79044, 79045, 79046, 79051, 79052, 79054, 79056, 79057, 79059, 79061, 79062, 79064, 79065, 79068, 79070, 79072, 79079, 79080, 79081, 79083, 79084, 79087, 79088, 79092, 79093, 79094, 79095, 79096, 79097, 79098
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For more information & reporting, contact TX CLPPP at:
 Texas Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
 Epidemiology & Disease Surveillance Unit
 Texas Department of State Health Services
 PO BOX 149347 • Austin, TX 78714-9347
 1-800-588-1248
www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead



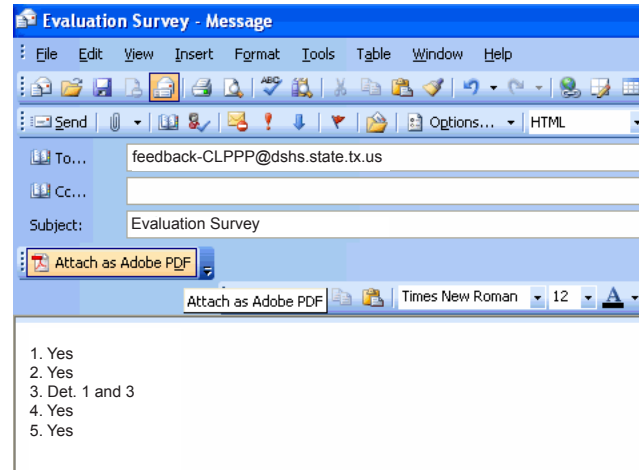
Three Ways to Submit Survey

1. Submit survey online at:
www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead

2. Complete and mail survey below to:
TX CLPPP
Attn: Patrick Bloomingdale
P.O. BOX 149347
Austin, TX 78714

3. Email survey to:
feedback-CLPPP@dshs.state.tx.us

Example Email



Evaluation Survey for the *Blood Lead Screening and Testing Guidelines for Texas Children: Quick Reference Guide*

1. Did you read the *Quick Reference Guide*?

Yes No

2. Was the *Quick Reference Guide* understandable?

Yes No

3. Indicate which determinant(s), if any, of the *Quick Reference Guide* was/were unclear. Circle all that apply.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. Did you see the table, *Schedule for Obtaining a Diagnostic Venous Follow-up*?

Yes No

5. Were you able to find one or more targeted zip codes in your area?

Yes No

Please email any additional comments about the *Quick Reference Guide* to
feedback-CLPPP@dshs.state.tx.us



<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead>

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Local Health Department CLPPP Programs

City of Dallas	4500 Spring Ave.	Dallas, TX 75210	214-670-7663
City of Houston	8000 N Stadium Dr., 6th Floor	Houston, TX 77054	713-794-9349
Harris County	2223 West Loop South	Houston, TX 77027	713-439-6126
San Antonio Metro	911 Castroville Rd.	San Antonio, TX 78237	210-434-0077



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