



Media Advisory

Media Contact:

Garry Holland

317.523.4363

education@indynaacp.org

NAACP, IU Law School to Host Forum on Lead Legislation

Indianapolis, November 18, 2019 – The Greater Indianapolis NAACP Branch #3053, in partnership with the IU McKinney School of Law, will hold a public forum on Thursday, Nov. 21, to discuss model legislation to better address childhood lead poisoning in Indiana.

When: Thursday, November 21, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Where: IU McKinney School of Law, 530 West New York Street, Indianapolis

Who: Indiana State Sen. Jean Breaux, D-Indianapolis
Indiana State Sen. Rick Niemeyer, R-Lowell
New Jersey State Sen. Ronald L. Rice, D-Newark
Elizabeth Mahn, Deputy Budget Director, Education Department, New Jersey
Professor Carlton Waterhouse, Howard University School of Law
Dr. Heidi Beidinger, Director, Eck Institute for Global Health, University of Notre Dame

Why: Earlier this year, the Greater Indianapolis NAACP received results of lead water testing 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, which required action to remove sources of lead from those schools.

This forum will discuss model legislation passed in New Jersey to protect children from lead poisoning after similar problems surfaced in schools in that state. It requires health authorities to take action when a child's blood-lead level reaches 5 micrograms per deciliter, consistent with recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Prior to passing [Senate Bill 1830](#) in 2017, New Jersey – like Indiana today – didn't take action until a child's blood-lead level reached 10 micrograms per deciliter. Some local health departments in Indiana take action at 5 micrograms per deciliter, while others do not.

Indiana also has a poor record of conducting lead screenings during doctor visits, which is the best way to identify children with lead poisoning. Federal law requires all children eligible for Medicaid to be screened for lead poisoning at 12 and 24 months. According to the state's [2017 Childhood Lead Surveillance Report](#), while 94% of all Medicaid-eligible children received the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine, only 11% of those children were given the required blood lead test.

According to the CDC, “Lead exposure can affect nearly every system in the body and is associated with numerous behavioral and learning problems (e.g. reduced IQ, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, juvenile delinquency, and criminal behavior). Research indicates that even low levels of lead in a child’s blood can affect IQ, the ability to pay attention, and academic achievement.”

The Greater Indianapolis NAACP earlier this year pushed to create a Lead Testing Initiative to 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 the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), there is no known safe level of lead in young children, and millions of children are still exposed to lead in their homes.

#