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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lead Poisoning is Preventable!

Did you know lead poisoning is 100% preventable? “Lead is a metal that is toxic to our bodies and can cause serious health issues for children who have been exposed,” stated Gabrielle Lanich, Lead Program Coordinator of Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health). “Young children under 6 years old are most at risk for lead poisoning because their bodies are rapidly developing.” The health effects of lead poisoning are permanent and can affect a child into adulthood. Childhood lead poisoning can harm the brain and nervous system leading to learning difficulties, lower IQ, difficulty paying attention, organ damage, and at very high levels, lead poisoning can be fatal. Lead poisoning can also be dangerous for pregnant women because lead can be passed to the baby during pregnancy.

Here are some easy ways to prevent lead poisoning:

- **Take everyday steps to stay healthy.** Eating a well-balanced diet, especially foods high in calcium, iron, and vitamin C can help reduce the body’s absorption of lead. Washing your hands and children’s hands with soap and water several times a day can help limit lead exposure. You should also wash children’s toys, bottles, and pacifiers regularly to avoid exposure to lead dust, and regularly clean your home with a damp cloth, sponge, or mop to minimize possible lead dust.
- **Check your home for lead.** If you live in a home built before 1978 you may consider having your home checked for lead. Our Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, and Wyoming (GLOW) Counties Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) may be able to help you with this. You may qualify for a home lead inspection if your home is in the GLOW area, was built before 1978, and a child under 6 lives there or spends more than 6 hours a week there.
- **Renovate lead safe.** Homes built before 1978 are more likely to have lead-based paint that can be disturbed when renovating. If you are renovating,

repairing, or painting a home built before 1978, use a Lead-Safe Certified contractor. If you are planning on doing your own work, use lead-safe work practices to protect both you and your family. For tips on how to be lead-safe when renovating visit <https://www.epa.gov/lead/lead-safe-renovations-diyers>. Also, our GLOW Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes Program may be able to renovate for you. Contact the Genesee County Health Department to see if you qualify.

- **Get your child tested.** The only way to find out if there is lead in a child's blood is to take them for a blood lead test. There are no obvious signs or symptoms of lead poisoning, that's why it's important to get them tested. Children should be tested at ages 1 and 2. Talk with your pediatrician to determine if your child should be tested further. GLOW CLPPP is able to offer transportation to lead testing at no cost for parents or guardians and children under 6 years old. Contact the Genesee County Health Department to determine if you are eligible for this service.

For more information or to learn more about our programs contact the Genesee County Health Department at 585-344-2580 ext. 5555 or Health.GOlead@co.genesee.ny.us. You can also visit GOHealthNY.org.