

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

ART STRAUSS STATEMENT REGARDING
THE DUMBING DOWN OF COLUMBUS CHILDREN FROM LEAD POISONING
May 17, 2000

As senior citizens at age 76, Cindy and I are blessed to live in an age where The Great Turning is taking place. There is hope that increasing numbers of people throughout the world are being transformed in their bodies, minds, and spirits to embrace their interdependence with all life on Earth and with their Mother Earth from whom they cannot separate themselves and live.

Like the essays in *Thinking Like A Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings*, (by John Seed, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming, & Arne Naess, from New Society Publishers, Santa Cruz, CA, 1988), we are making the Great Turning away from the prevailing death culture and toward a sustainable planet. Joanna R Macy & Molly Young Brown expand this vision in their 1998 book, *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives., Our World*, New Society Publishers, PO Box 189, Gabriola Island, BC VOR 1X0, Canada.

We accomplish this, step by step, in company with the members of Simply Living, a local community of Columbus citizens, whose mission is: "To educate ourselves and others to live responsibly and sustainably in joyful relationship with the earth and one another."

"Who Are We?: A seven-year-old experiment in asking the question: 'How do we become the change we seek for the world, and what does that look like in the everyday?' We work primarily as volunteers, with four persons at this time having limited contractual support for specific projects. The following three themes describe our focus:

Simplifying our lives - learning what is outwardly simple and inwardly rich
Greening the earth loving - all of the children of all of the species all of the time
Healing towards wholeness - serving through a greater sense of purpose"

As members of the Central Ohio Group of the Sierra Club, we invest in its national, state, and local clout to change the political landscape from being dominated by the Business Party (consisting mostly of Republicans and Democrats beholden to the Corporations) to a climate of participation of the citizenry in such a way as to create a true democracy where everyone has a voice and no Corporation can dump its externalities on any neighborhood.

For forty years I have watched those government agencies, the local, state, and federal agencies, which are mandated by the People of America to protect the public from the hazards of modern life, give lip service to that protection while doing the bidding of corporate extractors and polluters. The US EPA, the particularly egregious Ohio EPA, the health departments, the mining regulators, the state forest regulators, the electric and nuclear utility regulators and the water departments, have all considered the Corporations to be their clients, not the People. At least one public official, Donald Shregardus, former Director of OEPA, has verbally stated that his clients were the Corporations. OEPA continues to behave like it.

The regulatory process does not work for human beings and their environment. It works to protect corporations from the just anger of the public which is being harmed. It turns the

process of insuring safety into the process of forcing the public to prove harm, when most issues of the assault of polluters on the public have no smoking gun for proof, just plenty of body counts.

In general, the Medical Establishment has sided with the Corporations. From the years around 1962, when The American Medical Association vehemently opposed Rachel Carson's speaking out in *Silent Spring*, siding with the Pesticide Industry, to the period of 1989-2000 when "Federal investigators say most states are flouting a 1989 law requiring that young children on Medicaid be tested for lead poisoning." (NYT 1999)

"The danger of lead was first identified 96 years ago [1904] when an Australian physician published the first report in a medical journal ... Gibson urged that 'The use of lead-based paint within the reach of children should be prohibited by law.' Australia finally took Gibson's advice in 1922, 50 years [1978] before the US took similar action." (RE&HW 687, "Dumbing Down The Children - Part 1")(See RE&HW 688, p.1 for when nations other than the US took action.)

(RE&HW 688 also details the promotion of lead paint by a Lead Industry knowingly aware of its dangers. "As early as 1897 one paint manufacturer in New York City was advertising that 'Aspinall's Enamel is *not* made with lead and is non-poisonous.'")

The story of lead in gasoline is a similar tragic tale. "There are two major sources of lead in the environment, both of them human in origin. The first is leaded gasoline, which was outlawed in the US in 1976 but which left a residue of ... 13 billion pounds of lead in the environment in the form of a fine toxic dust.(2) Much of that powdery lead is still moving around in soil and house dust. Furthermore leaded gasoline is still being used in many countries outside the US, so contamination of the atmosphere continues, producing a steady toxic fallout. Without human help, nature does produce some lead dust, but humans now produce 19 times as much as nature produces each year -- a startling reminder of how numerous innocent market-based decisions can add up to an intractable problem of huge proportions." (RE&HW 687)

I take issue with Dr Montague of RE&HW about the "Innocence" of market-based decisions and their backing by public health departments. The Columbus and Ohio Health Departments have a long history of siding with "market-based decisions" such as their opposition to shutting down the dioxin-spewing Columbus Municipal Trash Incinerator, and Ohio's convoluted support of the opening of the WTI hazardous waste incinerator with its stack on eye level with an elementary school 1100 feet away.

It was not until 1991 that the Columbus Health Dept instituted its own Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) and began slowly to test children and intervene, reaching about 1,000 testings a year, in 1995-1997, for which there is data in the Columbus XL Project Proposal. This in the face of widespread contamination by the Lead Industry since 1889. "[About] 10 billion pounds of lead were used in paint in the US between 1889 and 1979 and much of it remains where it was originally put, slowly deteriorating into a toxic dust ... An estimated 42 million families live in homes containing an average of 140 pounds of lead in paint." (RE&HW 687, p.2)

Nowadays, government agencies protect the despoilers by hedging about their dealings with the public with restrictions that inhibit dialogue and questioning of their policies from the public. Public hearings are often just a recitation of a policy followed by the litany of testimony in opposition, while the real decision-making is done behind closed doors with the 900-pound corporate gorillas in attendance. It remains to be seen whether Project XL will be any different.

I am heartened to see that there is actually a segment of the Columbus Health Dept engaged in work to protect children from lead poisoning and that there is a Project XL process purporting to involve the public. Having watched the compromised processes of Priorities '95, I am still pretty skeptical.

My position is that lead standards need to be raised 625 times to where children are no longer being poisoned routinely by our human industrial processes year after year after year, with no consequences for that industry except to continue making deadly profits from their imposition of their externalities upon the environment (which includes human beings - we are PART of the environment, not separate from it.)

My position is that the City of Columbus is obligated to eliminate sources of the powdery white lead from housing and from the water supply at the standards proposed in RE&HW #687-689. I, therefore, charge the City to change plumbing codes to OUTLAW ANY use of lead, whether in solder or in lead-bearing fittings for piping, or in lead-bearing fixtures. 8% lead in fixtures and couplings is unacceptable if it is a source of the lead turning up in tap water testing, which the City spokespersons indicate it is.

I do not feel comfortable with the Water Dept's request for complete absolution from the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), and, given the Water Dept history with atrazine in the water, I am skeptical that it will keep lead out of the water. Its experiment with ferric chloride and subsequent exceedence of USEPA standards of 15 ppb of lead in City water is not good science but is guinea-pigging. All of my feedback from environmental justice organizations is, "Don't trust the Columbus Division of Water."

Consideration should be given to requiring retrofit by contractors who knowingly used lead solder and lead-bearing fittings and fixtures. The City and contractors are morally liable for use of lead-bearing products and PVC products in water system conduits, whether or not they accept responsibility therefor. The Business Party cries Caveat Emptor when confronted with this liability, and will do anything to avoid its social responsibilities, including huge PR campaigns and the buying of politicians.

The City contends that Lead Service Lines (LSLS) between mains and the curb stop in Columbus are of such age that they are covered inside with a coating of calcified scale which renders them harmless so far as corrosives in the water leaching lead (Pb) from them. They claim that removing these lines will disturb and release lead (Pb) into the water especially if connected to lead (Pb) home service lines from curb stop to meter. They presumably would advise against replacing the lead (Pb) home service lines too for the same "disturbance" reason.

Lyn Kelly FACT: The City's LSLs are 4-5 ft in length if the main is on the same side as the curb stop, but street width needs to be added to that length if the curb stop is on the side opposite to the main.

Lyn Kelly FACT: Electrolysis is low for lead with copper, steel, or aluminum, so joints are not subject to much erosion and leaking, which was probably one of the reasons it was used so extensively.

I understand (from Lyn Kelly) that City Lead Service Lines installation was terminated in the 1940 era, and that the City has used a variety of materials since. Currently the City uses copper replacement lines. It is conceivable that at some future time, if the City returns to more corrosive treatments, that the US EPA LCR (Lead/Copper Rule) might be exceeded again. The "flexibility" the City is asking for tends to encourage the City to experiment some more. EPA has been studying trihalomethanes (THMs) and haloacidicacids (HAAS) and 4 weeks ago came up with 7 Phase 2 options for water treatment facilities to use in treating them. THMs and TAAs are hazardous disinfection byproducts. One of these options would cut the treatment by half.

Lyn Kelly's opinion: The EPA is trying to control THMs and TAAs because they can do it, not because they are needed.

Lyn Kelly FACT: The City cannot eliminate cryptosporidium from our drinking water. They do disinfect for salmonella.

Lyn Kelly FACT: The City cannot remove Nitrates. (Nitrate blooms from agricultural fertilizer runoff are announced on the news upon reaching high levels in the growing season.)

Lyn Kelly FACT: The City can remove Atrazine by using powdered activated carbon, but it is an expensive treatment. The City acts when Atrazine levels are greater than 3 ppb. Treatment reduces concentrations to 2 ppb.

Since current practice is often to use PVC pipes for home service replacement, (which leach dioxins into the water), it appears that the plumbing state of the art in the City, and the codes which regulate it, leave something to be desired. It sounds as if a complete overhaul of the codes is in order. The City, in discussions on Columbus Project XL, has stated that it replaces lead piping with copper, a comforting revelation providing they don't start using more corrosive water treatments which liberate copper (and lead) into the water. (We haven't explored the dangers from dissolved copper or heard action levels from the City.)

The City should immediately institute a "first draw" program to test the lead content of ALL housing stock, beginning with the oldest housing tracts in poor neighborhoods, to alert the public to the hazards. Because of the resistance of citizens to early morning intrusions to draw samples of water which has been sitting in the pipes for at least six hours, education must precede the testing and mechanisms must be developed to accomplish the task. It sounds as if the LCR program was meant to do just that, but is being sabotaged by the difficulty of deciding

what to do in the face of the multiple sources of the lead contamination at the tap.

Since first draw lead contamination at the tap is the correct measure of the hazard, whatever the source, that should be the measure of requiring action, and the "how" should be pursued by the regulator and victim in concert. The urgency of stopping the Dumbing Down of Our Children should be used to bring folks together.

The level of distrust of governments mandated to protect people from pollutions and environmental damage, and from intrusions into privacy, is at an all-time high, given the proliferation of government failures to protect. Rebuilding trust is a painful process and will take generations during which the truth is told routinely. The City needs to address this distrust by leveling with people and those non-governmental organizations trying to get at the truth. No sooner do we uncover a government/corporate secret covering up damages, than another one pops up for us to research and demand remediation.

The City should provide the funds for stopping this lead poisoning of children. Taxpayers must be educated to want this infrastructure service. In today's "blame the poor" society, this, too, will require a transformation of spirit. "in sum, we have a federally-mandated blood-lead standard (10 mcg/dL) that permanently dumbs down any children who meet it, which is nearly a million children at any moment, and roughly 200,000 new dumbing downs are occurring each year." (RE&HW 689, page two, columns 1 & 2.)

This figure of 10 mcg/dL blood lead level is proven in current literature to miss the lead poisoning of children between 10mcg/dL and zero. A USEPA source says that its detection capability fails at 2 mcg/dL, but the literature is saying that there is provable damage to children at 5 mcg/dL, yet the Lead-Safe Columbus Program is touting 15 mcg/dL as its real action level.

According to the Water Dept Project XL Proposal, LSCP will *"...test all children less than six residing in a home where tap water exceeded the Lead Action Level."* This is apparently stated to include other children in a house where one child has been tested in a sweep testing. The sweep testing has apparently targeted 10,578 children under the age of six in the identified census tracts. It is not clear how many of these children have been tested from JAN 1998 to MAY 2000. The 1995-1997 effort was testing 10,000 children a year, but not reporting on any levels found below the 10 mcg/dL standard. I believe records should be kept on all kids testing positive for lead and follwups recorded. From what CHD spokesepersons said, I also believe that the finger stick record is too unreliable and should not be included in data base records.

My position is that we are still suffering with lead levels from gasoline containing tetraethyl lead and from the tons of lead in air, water and soil. We will continue to do so for decades, because of the failure of federal, state, and local entities to protect us by proper regulation of the lead industry. Since the Ethyl Corporation moved its leaded gasoline operations offshore to plague the Third World, having been denied the US market, it still pumps lead into the atmosphere and what goes around, comes around. The US should lead the way in negotiations to stop lead pollution the world around.

We cannot change the corporate mentality because it worships at the altar of Greed and the Bottom Line. It will take generations to do that - a transformation of which the Society is presently incapable because of its embrace of the Consumerist Religion which the PR machines of the Corporations preach in every press medium.

Wouldn't it be fine if the Corporations diverted the billions they spend on PR to reducing the externalities they foist off on the public and its environment? Do I speak as if Corporations were not part of the environment? No, from the CEO on down through the ranks of corporate workers, they are inseparable from their Mother Earth; they just don't behave as if they are.

Since the US EPA Lead Standards are not being enforced, and they are 625 times too low, it is incumbent upon government at every level to allocate the necessary funds for beginning to move toward that goal. The XL Project has begun by asking the EPA to LOWER standards for lead. This runs exactly counter to what is needed to protect the Public.

I contend that the City's proposed swap of "flexibility" for an agreement to START fulfilling a federal mandate to test Medicaid children for lead exposure, would 11 years ago have uncovered the scandal of poisoned children providing we informed their voiceless parents. But the City's proposal, which dwells at length on the flaws in the LCR program, does not detail the history of City lead exposure testing of poor children under the Medicaid program.

The City does not deal with the increase in knowledge since 1991 and continues to stick to the CDC's 1991 actionable levels, instead of prudently considering EBLs of 5 mcg/dL as actionable. "Indeed, some of the nation's most prestigious medical organizations acknowledge that children are being harmed at the current federally-established 'acceptable' level. The American Academy of Pediatrics in 1993 reviewed 18 medical studies showing that lead diminishes a child's mental abilities ... for every 10 mcg/dL increase in blood lead levels, there was a lowering of mean (average) IQ in children by 4 to 7 points." (RE&HW #689, p.1)

(Gary Garvey of the Columbus Health Dept says the CDC 1991 standards are still in effect, which is why they were used in the Columbus Project XL Proposal, but he acknowledges that damage occurs at lower levels.)

The City Water Division's XL Proposal says, in paragraph 4.3.2, that the real action level for the Columbus Dept of Health is equal to or greater than 15 mcg/dL blood lead level, not 10 mcg/dL. The 15 mcg/dL "standard" is used thereafter. Thus, the easing of the standard continues. Combine that with the use of children as the miner's canary, and we have once more the classic Business Party approach to regulation and public protection.

(Gary Garvey says children are NOT being used as miners' canaries, but the preponderance of the evidence I see indicates they are.)

Further quotes from Rachel's Environment & Health Weekly, Nos. 687-689, follow to support my position:

The CDC's standards, which the Columbus Water Dept has cited are challenged by this quote from Rachel's: "On the face of it, the current 10 mcg/dL standard seems imprudent because it assumes that a potent nerve poison at levels 625 times as high as natural background is "acceptable" for children." (RE&HW #689, page one).

"Jane Lin-Fu, a well-known lead researcher, summarizes the early history of childhood lead poisoning in the U.S. this way: 'By the 1920s ... severe forms of childhood lead poisoning were recognized, and it became obvious that the illness was quite common in the U.S.'(7) The federal Centers for Disease Control concurred in 1979, [some 50 years later] saying, 'Lead poisoning in children from paint was recognized early in this century.'(7) But recognizing a problem and acting upon it are two different things." (RE&HW #687, p.2)

QUESTIONS WHICH ARISE AS A RESULT OF COMPARING THE CITY'S XL PROPOSAL TO RE&HW #687-689:

How many Lead Service Lines per year are replaced currently?

How many children are there in Columbus in any one year from age one to age 6, based on 1999-2000 rates?

How many POOR children are there in Columbus in any one year from age one to age 6, based on 1999-2000 rates?

How many Medicaid children in Columbus were tested (free in implementation of the 1989 law) for lead in 1989, 1990, and 1991 before the City Health Dept instituted its first program?

How many POOR children in Columbus were tested in this first program from 1991-1995?

Your proposal states that some 31,219 children were tested between 1995 and 1997. That averages out to 10,406 per year. Every year how many POOR children come into the at-risk-child pool? Again, what percentage of the at-risk children were tested and how many of them were relieved of further exposure by renovation/encapsulation types of remediation?

How much City money was devoted to this program in 1995-1997? How much federal money?

How much total money is being allocated to the Columbus Lead-Safe Program (CLSP) and the Columbus Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) in 2000? How much was allocated in 1999?

What is the difference between CLSP and CLPPP?

How many children moved "out" of the at-risk category having sustained damage of more than 5 mcg/dL EBL between 1995-1997?

How many Medicaid children have been tested by the Medicaid program between 1998-2000?

How many showed damage above 5 mcg/dL?

How many of your answers are SWAGS? (SWAG means Scientific Wild Ass Guess.) Please note this evaluation in your answers if not backed up by valid data which is examinable at the input level.

How many POOR children went untested during 1998-2000? How many children above the poverty line went untested? Why don't we have a testing program for all children, which spends the necessary money, instead of spending \$10-20 million in taxpayer money on cost overruns for the Nationwide Arena? Instead of spending \$180,000,000 on renovating the OSU Stadium while being willing to designate only \$300,000 annually to lead abatement? Instead of compensating the poor for the years of discriminating against them to dumb down their children? Instead of revising the plumbing codes and requiring contractors to retrofit. Where is business responsibility? Where is political responsibility? Where are our priorities?

Is there a correlation between widespread lead poisoning of the populace and the immense interest in and promotion of violent sports? When does violence-prone behavior kick in in the Dumbing Down of the Generations?

Do we WANT to have dumbed-down children? The answer must be YES, since we have neglected this problem to placate the lead and plumbing industries and to discriminate racially and economically since 1914 at least. This Society is SICK unto death! Learning disabled children proliferate at the rate of 200,000 per year and anything and everything else takes priority'

We are faced with an unparalleled opportunity. The Rachel's Environment & Health Weekly scholarship of Dr Peter Montague has provided us with an historical overview of our society's experience with lead and its promoters in RE&HW 687-689, complete with references to the library of information thereof. From his article, Vol.VII, #2, in *Hazardous Waste News*, 12/8/1986, to 57 other articles, Dr Montague has spoken as a prophet without honor in his own country. The issue has never been defined better than in RE&HW 687-689.

The opportunity to face this issue and properly fund its resolution is NOW. Columbus Project XL can be part of that resolution or it can perpetuate the Business Connection and give lip service to protecting our children of today and our children of tomorrow. Let Nationwide pay the cost overruns for the Arena to show its good faith before the Community. Let OSU give its workers a living wage and adequate family health benefits to deal with lead poisoned kids as well as kids poisoned with the rest of the witches brew of pesticides out there today.

Let OSU extract itself from the below-water-table effort to dig down the playing field and its seating at huge expense, and not be so greedy with the sky boxes. That \$180,000,000 renovation has already exceeded any sane level of expense. Use the money instead to fund OSU research into' lead exposure of children AND the ways we can stop it. That's a REAL priority. There are other REAL priorities around Columbus and OSU. Let's do something about them - and not just take token actions.

Let Mayor Coleman convince City Council to adequately fund lead testing, intervention and abatement, first in low-income housing, then in ALL Columbus housing. Let us staff up to meet this challenge with millions of dollars, not thousands. Let us use the funds to really help the poor in old neighborhoods to make their housing safe. Mayor Coleman, will you meet the challenge to rid ALL Columbus of lead poisoned housing? Is this a high priority in our City, or will you continue to give lip service as administrations before you have? Will you lead us (as in "Leadership") or will you let the Business Party continue to lead our City (as in "lacing us with the poisonous metal," [bad pun intended])? We know what the first priorities of the Business Party are and we want to transform our Community from those goals to. ones which you have declared rate highest on your agenda: the health, well being, and cooperation of ALL citizens, from the lowly to the high and mighty in our town.

Respectfully submitted, Art Strauss, 187 Acton Road, Columbus, Ohio 43214-3303,
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May 31, 2000

Letters-to-the-Editor Editor *
The Columbus Dispatch
34 South Third St, Columbus OH 43215

Dear Editor,

* - Please consider this for a Saturday OpEd letter. I know it is much too long for the Opinion Page, but I think it is important to have out there for the public.

Penny Wise, Pound Foolish Columbus: Lashutka Legacies

[Lime] "...sludge, a byproduct of treating drinking water, had been dumped in the Scioto for decades until 1965." "ODOT plans to remove 100,000 cubic yards of the sludge..." (Dispatch, Jan.6) {30 words}

"ODOT officials say they do not foresee problems in funding a \$6.2 million cleanup of lime sludge from the Scioto River...'the cost of the lime sludge cleanup likely would be "absorbed through normal business.'" (Dispatch, Jan.5) (37 words}

"Aw, come on. I was a teen-ager in 1970 and discovered it while walking through the area with my dog ... It was a rather large patch of the stuff with nothing growing in it." (Dispatch Jan. 12) {36 words}

[LIME] "Sludge found in Olentangy River: City estimates pipe leaked for a month. At least 300 tons of lime sludge from a Columbus water-treatment plant have spilled into a ditch that leads to the Olentangy River, just upstream from a stretch where biologists found a rare fish last summer. City officials are spending at least \$300,000 to clean up the mess." "...2-inch hole in the rusty pipe near the Bethel Road interchange." "We're finding the sludge all over the area," said Lynn Kelly, the city's water supply and treatment coordinator. (Dispatch, May 26) {93 words}

Like so many government and business entities, the CWD has treated its wastes as externalities (environmental impact not calculated into costs) for decades. The lime sludge scandal is just one of many causing wasteful expending of taxpayer funds and brings up a lot of questions. Why doesn't the CWD know exactly where ALL of its lime sludge goes? Where DOES the Hap-Creman sludge pipe go when it's not leaking? Doesn't common sense say lime sludge is not good for fish? When will the Columbus Water Dept take full responsibility for its operations? {92 words}

It is currently asking the USEPA for "flexibility" from its lead-in-the-water standards for past and future exceedence of 15 ppb lead in our water at the tap. Like so many CWD/CHD EPA-derived standards, lead-in-water and lead-in-low-income-housing, with their attendant high blood lead levels in children are proving un-protective as study after study shows. (Read Rachel's Environment & Health Weekly #687-689 series at <<http://www.rachel.org>>. {63 words}

CWD will reward us by moving \$300,000 per year from its separate income, for 15 years, over to the Columbus Health Dept, for testing children for lead poisoning, and education of their parents, contractors, and housing landlords, and for some medical intervention in cases of serious poisoning. The nobility of this sharing gets lost because the CWD claims that lead poisoning is not coming from the water, even though their experimentation with ferric chloride treatment is said to have led to the exceedence of lead standards. Apparently, they want to be able to exceed lead standards in the future without USEPA intervention. {102 words}

CWD/CHD's "Project XL Columbus" proposal purports to provide a solution to lead poisoning in poor children within 15 years, but does not explain overall funding from both CWD and CHD, or why this project takes so long. The Columbus Health Dept's leisurely pace in addressing lead poisoning in poor children started in 1991, two years after the Federal Government provided fed funds for testing ALL Medicaid children for lead, a program most states ignored. In 1995-97 they actually gathered reportable data, testing some 31,000 children, and finding 2,261 with Elevated Blood Levels (EBLS) by inadequate standards, which miss EBLs below 10 mcg/dL blood lead level, where damage is known to occur at EBLs of 2.5 mcg/dL "Too Little, Too Late" seems to apply here. {124 words}

It would be helpful if the Coleman Administration were to pledge to abate Columbus lead in the housing of poor children in 5 years, not 15. Let Nationwide pay the \$10-\$20 million cost overrun taxpayers are slated to pay for the Arena so we can look after our kids! Why is the Arena being completed in 3 years, when the Project XL proposal will take 15? Why are Arena priorities so much higher than those of the IQs of our poor children? The next meeting to consider the XL Proposal is in mid-June. It would be helpful to have more input there from the poisoned public. {106 words}

(Total: 683 words)

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June 14, 2000

To: Mary Francis Ball, *Simply News* Editor:

From: Art Strauss

Subj: Submission of article for *Simply News*, Aug/SEP issue

LEAD POISONING OF CHILDREN HAS NOT GONE AWAY
JUN 10, 2000

* So, WHAT'S DANGEROUS ABOUT LEAD?:

"Evidence accumulated over the last 15 years ... [is] associated with neurobehavioral, cognitive, and developmental effects. Among those effects are reduced IQ level; increased reading & learning disabilities; reduced attention span; increased hyperactivity, hearing loss; low birth weight, early delivery, & developmental problems in the developing fetus. Lead poisoning has also been linked with: cancer, anemia, high blood pressure, kidney disease, short-term memory loss, sterility, impotence, and spontaneous abortion." (Emphasis added.) [Excerpted from CDW / CDH Project XL Proposal, JUN 11, 1999.] {Current studies explore lead's link to the societal diseases of crime and violence.} (98 words)

Rachel's Environment & Health Weekly, in a 3-part series, "DUMBING DOWN THE CHILDREN," has again addressed this problem in a comprehensive way in FEB-MAR 2000. Issues 687-689 tell the history of lead poisoning and measure today's problem. Dr Peter Montague, the editor, has published some 60 articles on the lead question since 1986 (available at Art & Cindy's). Read the following quotes: (62 words)

"In sum, we have a federally mandated blood-lead standard (10 mcg/dL) that permanently dumbs down any children who meet it, which is nearly a million children at any moment, and roughly 200,000 new dumbing-downs are occurring each year. Medical authorities agree that the only real solution is primary prevention -- keeping lead-contaminated dust away from children. Credible estimates show that the federal government could make a profit of \$1.08 billion by undertaking primary prevention in federally-owned or -assisted housing, but instead the government requires the dead canary approach, blood-lead testing, which the states then refuse to carry out." (RE&HW 689) (99 words)

* Let it be said that Columbus' Health Dept began testing in 1991, two years after the passage of the Medicaid law and has tested about 10,000 kids a year since 1995, but only intervening significantly at blood lead levels at or above 15 mcg/dL. (44 words)

"Most of the victims of all this are babies born into poverty. We can only conclude that current government policies must reflect the values of those who hold power. Those who make public policies must feel a need to maintain a permanent pool of people disadvantaged from birth. Governments throughout the U.S. must be doing what powerful elites want them to do -- refusing to confront the lead industry, the paint industry, the housing industry, the real estate industry, and the campaign contribution industry, refusing to apply the primary prevention

approach to this public menace, but, instead, continuing to poison hundreds of thousands of poor black and hispanic children each year." (RE&HW 689) (112 words)

* The Columbus Health Department's Lead-Safe Columbus Program, tests children and does general education and abatement instruction of families with children testing above 10 mcg/dL blood lead. They chose to wait until kids tested positive at levels well above the damage level before taking action. (Recent studies show damage at levels as low as 2.5 mcg/dL. One EPA official told me that blood-lead levels below 2.0 mcg/dl are undetectable. He did not say that there is no damage below 2.0.) (79 words)

* The Columbus Water Dept put out an educational brochure in 1994, some two years after the federal Safe Drinking Water standard was established in 1992 at 15 ppb and the process of educating the public began. (35 words)

"The danger of lead in paint was first identified in paint 96 years ago [1904] when ... an Australian physician published the first report in a medical journal describing children poisoned by lead-based paint. Gibson specifically described the dangers to children from lead-based paint on the walls and verandas of houses ... Australia finally took Gibson's advice in 1922, 50 years before the U.S. took similar action." (RE&HW 687.) (67 words)

* The neglect of millions of children can be laid at the door of the Business Party which has always considered profits before the quality of life of our children. This history is a stark commentary on the hazards of modern life at the hands of Corporate America. (47 words)

* See the browse-only binder "LEAD: DUMBING DOWN THE CHILDREN" in the Simply Living Bookstore. There the multiple health effects of lead poisoning are discussed. There, too, find the Columbus Water Dept and Columbus Health Dept collaboration on "Project XL Columbus," in which the Water Dept proposes to USEPA to pay \$300,000 per year for FIFTEEN years to the Health Dept for child testing and intervention in families having a child testing at 15 mcg/dL lead-blood level or above. I consider this a miner's canary solution, and challenge the City to spend A LOT MORE THAN THIS TO HELP POOR FAMILIES with lead-contaminated housing, and to insure that BOTH water AND housing are freed of lead hazards within FIVE years. Will you, too, challenge the City? (124 words)

* In return for its largesse, the Water Dept asks the USEPA to relax its LCR (Lead Copper Rule) for at least 3 years, and maybe for the full 15 years of the Final Plan Agreement, so that if its water exceeds the Rule's standard for lead content, it won't invoke the USEPA LCR requirement for expensive replacement of Lead Service Lines. Is this robbing Peter to Pay Paul, or what? (70 words)

(837 words total)

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