

April 28, 2000

Dear Colleague:

Childhood lead poisoning is a serious health threat to many of our Nation's children. We estimate that nearly one million children in the United States have elevated blood lead levels. A recent General Accounting Office report stated that three-fourths of all children, ages 1 through 5 years and found to have elevated blood lead levels, were enrolled in Medicaid and other health care subsidy programs. This equates to nearly 700,000 children nationwide. Children enrolled in Medicaid programs are nearly five times more likely to have harmful blood lead levels than other children. It is critical that we focus our efforts to identify and reach these high-risk children. Accordingly, we are sending you this information to bring your attention to the need for better coordination at Federal, State and local levels to ensure that Medicaid-enrolled children receive appropriate screening tests and treatment services, and to encourage the sharing of data between State and local health departments and State Medicaid Agencies to accomplish this goal.

Within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) are working together to address this public health issue. One of the goals of our effort is to increase the number of Medicaid-enrolled children who are screened for lead poisoning.

HCFA recently sent the enclosed letter to all State Medicaid Directors to:

clarify the requirements for lead screening for children enrolled in Medicaid;  
update States on HHS activities to address this serious public health problem; outline the goals of the Departmental Initiative on Lead Screening; and  
encourage State Medicaid Agencies to work with their State and local public health departments to accomplish this goal.

Please join us in taking whatever steps are necessary to provide leadership in addressing this important health care issue.

Sincerely,

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\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ Timothy M. Westmoreland Director Center for Medicaid and State Operations Health Care Financing Administration

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ Jeffrey P. Koplan Director Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Claude Earl Fox, M.D., M.P.H. Secretary Health Services  
and Resources for Children and Families Administration

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Olivia A. Golden Administrator Assistant Health Services and  
Resources for Children and Families Administration

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