



CHRIS TAYLOR

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ♦ 76th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

April 6th, 2016

Governor Scott Walker
Wisconsin State Capitol
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Secretary Kitty Rhoades
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson Street
Madison, WI 53703-3445

Governor Walker and Secretary Rhoades:

While public consciousness of childhood lead poisoning is on the rise, Wisconsin has been grappling with the problem for many years. It is a problem that does not discriminate between rural and urban communities. There is no safe lead level and the permanent effects of lead include reduced intelligence, learning disabilities, and developmental delays.

In Wisconsin, 4.5% of children are lead-poisoned, compared to 4.9% in Flint, Michigan. The statistics are more dire in certain communities. For example, 8.6% of children in the City of Milwaukee, 8.4% of children in the City of Watertown, and 7.3% of children in Buffalo County are lead poisoned. This is unacceptable, and exacerbates racial and socioeconomic disparities. Additionally, when an environmental assessment is done, the water in homes with children who have an elevated blood lead level is usually not tested. This is inexcusable, because we know that 20% of lead poisoning comes from the water.

Wisconsin Statute § 254.156 states that whenever the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “specifies a standard for the determination of lead poisoning or lead exposure that differs from that specified in s. 254.11(9), the department *shall* promulgate a rule defining ‘lead poisoning or lead exposure’ to correspond to the specification” of the CDC.

The level specified in § 254.11(9) is a level of lead in the blood of 10 or more micrograms per 100 milliliters of blood. The same standard is found in both DHS 163.03(67) and DHS 181.03(10).

However, in 2012, the CDC established a blood lead reference value of 5 micrograms per 100 milliliters of blood, where it previously had been 10 micrograms per 100 milliliters of blood. Why hasn’t DHS promulgated a rule setting the lead blood standard at 5 micrograms per 100 milliliters of blood, in line with the CDC standard?

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter, and I look forward to your response.

Representative Chris Taylor
76th Assembly District