

News Release

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: December 9, 2020

Contact: Greta Johnson
Assistant Chief of Staff
Office of Executive Shapiro
gjohnson@summitoh.net
330-643-2656



Marlene Martin
Administrative Coordinator/PIO
Summit County Public Health
mmartin@schd.org
330-926-5774

Hundreds of Summit County homes are lead free thanks to County collaboration

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Since 2013, Summit County has received \$5.4 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to fund lead removal in local homes to help prevent serious health conditions in children caused by lead exposure. Working together, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro’s Department of Community Development and Summit County Public Health (SCPH) have used the funds to complete 381 lead risk assessments and to remove lead from 307 homes. The agencies have also used the funds to conduct over 100 Healthy Home Assessments for low-income families throughout the county.

Summit County estimates nearly one-third of residential housing in the county was built before 1940, and more than 75% before 1978, the year lead-based paint was banned for residential use. Many of these homes have had lead removed or mitigated, but more than 33,000 may still contain lead-based paint or other lead contaminants.

“Through our partnership with Summit County Public Health, we are working hard to reduce the risk of lead exposure in our youngest residents, and to remove the financial barriers that impede the ability of home owners to make safety improvements,” said Executive Shapiro. “Families should not have to wonder if the home their children play in, sleep in and grow in is a hazard to long-term development and health.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, exposure to lead can have long-lasting and damaging effects on the health of child. Well-documented effects of lead poisoning include damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems and hearing and speech issues. These effects can cause additional long-term issues for children. Research has also shown lead exposure can cause harm during pregnancy.

In October 2019, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded Summit County a 42 month, \$5.6 million grant for lead hazard reduction programming. \$5 million was allocated to provide lead-hazard control in 200-225 housing units and \$600,000 to perform assessments in 250 homes.

“Lead exposure can have devastating effects on children that last a lifetime. Working with the Executive’s Office and local contractors, we are able to use these federal funds to make homes safe for all members of a family,” said Health Commissioner Donna Skoda. “No family should have to worry that their home is making a child sick.”

The Executive’s Office and SCPH work with local contractors to remedy lead in homes. Most often, this involves replacing or repairing window sills and frames, removing and replacing lead-based paint on walls and other surfaces, removing or replacing carpet, and cleaning heating, ventilation and air conditioning ducts. Depending on the size of the home and the severity of the problem, lead remediation is a costly process that low-income families could not afford without the assistance of the County’s program. Summit County Council most recently approved a \$64,000 remediation project for a one single-family home.

To be eligible for the Lead Based Paint Hazard Reduction Program, applicants must meet income guidelines, have children under the age of 6 residing or visiting the home more than 60 hours a year, have current homeowner’s insurance and be current on property taxes. Rental units are eligible for assistance. Additional information and the application are available at <https://co.summitoh.net/pages/Lead-Abatement-Program.html>.

###