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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### "Bright Futures Begin Lead-Free"

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 20 - 26

**OSHKOSH, WI (October 17, 2023)** – Each year, National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is a call to bring together individuals, organizations, and state and local governments to reduce childhood exposure to lead. Lead is toxic, especially in young children. Even low levels of lead in a child's blood can result in damage to the brain and nervous system, learning and behavior problems, slow growth and development, and hearing and speech problems.

Starting in January of 2024, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services put out new Universal Testing Guidelines stating that all children should get at least two lead tests by age 2. Children ages 3 to 5 should also get tested if they have no record of a previous test. As children who are lead-poisoned typically do not look or act sick, a blood test is the best way to find out if a child has lead poisoning. Winnebago County Public Health offers lead screenings at our Oshkosh and Neenah offices to those who are eligible. If you do not have insurance or need help getting a lead test for your child, contact Winnebago County Public Health to schedule a lead screening.

Winnebago County Public Health also works to eliminate lead hazards with its [Lead-Safe Homes Program](#). This program helps pay for the safe removal of lead from rental and owner-occupied homes. The public health department works directly with homeowners and contractors to coordinate a risk assessment and remove lead hazards. If a home qualifies for the program, up to 100 percent of the lead abatement costs could be covered. Lead-safe repairs may include new windows, siding, doors, painting, gutters or other lead hazard repairs.

"We have many older homes in Winnebago County, and the fact is that about half of the homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint," said Scott Fischer, Lead Abatement Project Coordinator for Winnebago County Public Health. "With Lead-Safe Homes Program we have been able to remove dangerous lead from many homes in our community, making them safer for children and people who are pregnant." Properties that meet the following criteria may be eligible:

- Children or pregnant women live in or regularly visit the home and are on Medicaid or BadgerCare Plus.
- The home or rental property was built before 1978.
- The property is insured and taxes are up to date.

If you do not qualify for the Lead-Safe Homes Program but would like a lead hazard risk assessment, you can find a certified inspector or risk assessor by visiting the [United States Environmental Protection Agency's website](#) or calling the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD. Ask your landlord to have your home or apartment tested if you rent. To find out if you have lead in your drinking water, contact your water company and ask about testing.

For more information about lead poisoning or the [Lead-Safe Homes Program](#), contact the Winnebago County Health Department at 920-232-3000 or visit [www.winnebagocountywi.gov/health](http://www.winnebagocountywi.gov/health). You can also find more information on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website: [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/index.htm)

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