



Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Department Announces Lead Based Paint Hazard Control Grant Award

(Mason City) - The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health has been awarded a competitive grant to protect children and families from the hazards of lead-based paint and from other home health and safety hazards. The three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) aims to reduce the number of children with elevated blood lead levels and protect families from lead poisoning by targeting low-income homes in Cerro Gordo County with significant lead-based paint hazards.

“Lead and other home safety issues have negatively impacted area children; we are thrilled to have the opportunity to remediate homes to remove lead and safety issues to offer a safer future to area families,” said Brian Hanft, Project Director. “As a first-time awardee, Cerro Gordo County will have the opportunity to use over one million dollars in funding to expand HUD’s reach into our community.”

“There is nothing more important than the health and safety of our children and these grants preventing lead poisoning provide a significant investment for their future,” Program Manager Jenna Willems stated. Older homes and poverty are risk factors for exposure to lead and other safety hazards. Nearly 18% of Cerro Gordo County children live in poverty* and almost 60% of homes in Cerro Gordo County were built prior to 1960** when concentration of lead in paint was higher. Lead-contaminated dust from deteriorated lead paint is the primary cause of young children's lead exposure and can lead to a variety of health problems, including reduced IQ, learning disabilities, developmental delays, reduced height, and impaired hearing. At higher levels, lead can damage a child's kidneys and central nervous system and cause anemia, coma, convulsions and even death.

For more information about lead or healthy homes, go to www.cghealth.com.

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**data from the American Community Survey (2015)*

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