



To whom it may concern,

We hope that you are doing well. We would like to support bill H5375 in the Rhode Island General Assembly that would enable municipalities in the state to create ordinances that would allow tenants to approve lead service line replacements in the event that the landlord cannot be reached or doesn't respond in a timely manner.

Exposure to lead has negative, permanent health effects. Lead exposure can be especially harmful for children under the age of 6. The Center for Disease control and Prevention's website states that childhood lead exposure can result in neurological damage as well as delays in growth and development¹. While many children don't show obvious signs that they have been exposed to lead, blood lead levels (BLLs) are measured during routine screenings¹.

Lead exposure is a major threat to public health and well-being in the South Providence Health Equity Zone. According the EJ Screen tool, the SPHEZ is in the 93rd percentile for the presence of lead paint statewide and in the 95th percentile for the presence of lead paint nationally². A 2023 article in the *Pediatric Research* journal revealed that rates of children with BLLs greater than the level of concern (5 µg/dL or higher, but the new national standard is now 3.5 µg/dL⁴), declined from 2016-2019³. However, census blocks in South Providence had significantly higher rates of children with BLLs that were greater than the level of concern³. Additionally, a larger percentage of children from households in the lowest quintile of the income distribution had BLLs greater than the level of concern³. Addressing this health disparity will require the reduction of lead exposure from any source.

To minimize the risk of lead exposure from drinking water, Providence Water is working to replace the lead service lines. As of right now, property owners must sign a Right of Entry and Release Form for Lead Service Line Replacement before to this work can begin. In the upcoming legislative session, we encourage you to support a bill that would allow towns and cities in Rhode Island to give tenants the ability to take steps to remove lead from their drinking water if landlord approval cannot be given in a timely fashion.

Respectfully,

South Providence Health Equity Zone

References:

1. "Lead Exposure Symptoms and Complications." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 10 Apr. 2024, www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/symptoms-complications/index.html.
2. United States Environmental Protection Agency. 2015. EJSCREEN. Retrieved: October, 23, 2024, www.epa.gov/ejscreen
3. Hauptman M, Rogers ML, Scarpaci M, Morin B, Vivier PM. Neighborhood disparities and the burden of lead poisoning. *Pediatr Res*. 2023 Aug;94(2):826-836. doi: 10.1038/s41390-023-02476-7. Epub 2023 Mar 10. PMID: 36899126; PMCID: PMC10000346.
4. CDC Updates Blood Lead Reference Value. (2024, April 2). <https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/php/news-features/updates-blood-lead-reference-value.html>