



AN ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING STORY

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL LEAD HAZARDS VIA WINDSHIELD SURVEY

Walworth County, Wisconsin

THE PROBLEM

After reviewing childhood lead poisoning data on the Wisconsin Environmental Public Health Tracking portal, Walworth County Department of Health and Human Services staff learned about 2% of children tested were poisoned. However, when they looked at 2010-2014 data by census tract, they found many pockets of the county where the percentage of kids poisoned was significantly higher, with two census tracts that doubled the state average of 9%.

WHAT WALWORTH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DID

To further understand lead risks in these parts of the county, health department staff conducted a windshield survey. A windshield survey is an informal assessment tool used to get a sense of a particular topic in a community—all done within a car. In this windshield survey, health department staff drove around areas of their county with higher percentages of kids poisoned and identified potential lead hazards. Staff were interested in learning which areas within a municipality could be prioritized for lead-safe community development and building permitting. They reviewed dwellings and areas frequented by children, like schools, parks, and recreation centers for visual signs of potential lead hazards.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT

After surveying the three major municipalities in Walworth County, health department staff found 113 homes had visible paint chipping and many more had windows, doors, garages, and decks with signs of chipping paint. They also noted the area of town, type of home (single family, multiple family, or apartment) or building, estimated age of home or building, and the rough socioeconomic status of the area. The findings of their windshield survey, coupled with census tract childhood lead poisoning data, will be used to work with municipal leaders to prioritize future interventions within Walworth County.

EXPLORE YOUR COUNTY'S
CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING
DATA AT THE CENSUS TRACT
LEVEL:

dhs.wisconsin.gov/epht

WISCONSIN ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING PROGRAM
Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health

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