

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 28, 2009

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Doctor's Orders – Wash Your Windows! Pediatricians Hit the Streets to Protect Children from Lead Poisoning

On Saturday, May 30th at 10:00 a.m. pediatricians from the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center will join outreach workers and community residents to teach parents about simple, low cost ways to keep their houses from lead poisoning their children.

Emilia Arana, MD and Francisco Enriquez, MD will demonstrate lead paint clean-up on windows at the home of Jessica Fonseca, at 1805 S. 15th Place. Jessica's daughter Ashley tested positive for lead poisoning and community outreach workers have been working with the family to apply for a City program where permanent repairs to the windows in their home can be made. Until that time, it is important for the Fonseca family – and others who have small children and live in older homes with painted wooden frame windows - to know how to clean the window sashes, sills and frames to keep lead paint dust from spreading throughout the house.

The number of children poisoned by lead goes up in the summertime when windows are opened up. Particles of paint and paint-dust are created by the window going up and down, and can collect in the sill, be spread through the house or be picked up directly on little hands when children reach out or stand at the window looking out.

According to Meaghan Schroeder, Lead Outreach Program Coordinator, "Children under the age of three are at greatest risk because they tend to put their hands and toys in their mouths, and it takes only a few specs of dust to poison a child."

Lead poisoning prevention efforts at Sixteenth Street include testing of children when they come in for a medical appointment/well-child check, combined with door-to-door neighborhood outreach program and testing of children during a recertification appointment at the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) nutrition program. To contact the Lead Poisoning Prevention Project at the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center call (414) 385-3375.

The only way to know if a child has been poisoned by lead is to have a blood test done. Lead poisoning in children under the age of six can interfere with brain and nervous system development causing attention and learning problems that can affect them for life.

Since 1969, Sixteenth Street Community Health Center has provided high quality, family based health care, health education and social services to Milwaukee's culturally diverse south side regardless of language, financial or cultural barriers.

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