PREVENTING CHILDHOOD LEAD EXPOSURE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

SB 399 helps protect Granite State children, families, and communities from the harmful impacts of lead exposure.

CHILDHOOD LEAD EXPOSURE IN NH

Lead exposure continues to affect the health of children and families in New Hampshire. The amount of lead dust that can poison a child is so tiny you can't see it on hands, toys, pacifiers, floors, and other surfaces. Crawling, sitting, and putting hands and toys in their mouths put **young children at high risk** for lead exposure. [1]

From 2017 to 2021, an average of **535 NH children per year** were found to have **elevated blood lead levels** (levels above the CDC's reference value). These levels are **unsafe in children and require action**, including exposure investigations and medical case management. [2]

Despite a state law that all children have their lead levels tested at one and two years old, data shows that there's **a gap in testing**. In the most recent data from 2021, only 60 percent of one-year-olds and 51 percent of two-year-olds were screened. [2] As NH children are at high risk for exposure, **testing is critical.**

AT A GLANCE [1]

HARMS OF LEAD EXPOSURE

Lead exposure in childhood can cause adverse effects:

- Developmental delays
- Cognitive deficits
- Learning disabilities
- Behavioral challenges

IMPORTANCE OF TESTING

There are few signs or symptoms that a child is being exposed to lead. **The only way to know is to test.**

SUPPORT THE HEALTH OF GRANITE STATE CHILDREN

New Hampshire has an opportunity to support our children through **SB 399, a bill that would help families access lead testing by removing financial barriers**. The bill would require insurance companies to cover the full cost of lead testing at one and two years old and any follow-up testing needed. Currently, if a child's test shows elevated blood levels, there is no requirement that follow-up testing is covered by health insurance. Follow-up testing is essential to ensuring that treatment for lead poisoning is working.

SB 399 would mean free lead testing for NH's most at-risk children, helping to further address childhood lead exposure in our state.

TAKE ACTION TO SUPPORT SB 399:

- Contact your lawmakers to urge them to support the bill
- Share your experience with lead testing or exposure
- Spread the word on social media

SCAN OR VISIT NEW-FUTURES.ORG/LEAD

References:

1. *Health Effects of Lead Exposure* (2022, September 2). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/health-effects.htm
2. *2021 Lead Exposure in New Hampshire Data Brief* (2023, January). New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. https://wisdom.dhhs.nh.gov/wisdom/assets/content/resources/lead-exposures/2021-lead-data-briefs/NH-Report-2021.pdf

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STORIES: THE IMPACT OF LEAD EXPOSURE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire families are grappling with the harmful effects of childhood lead poisoning.

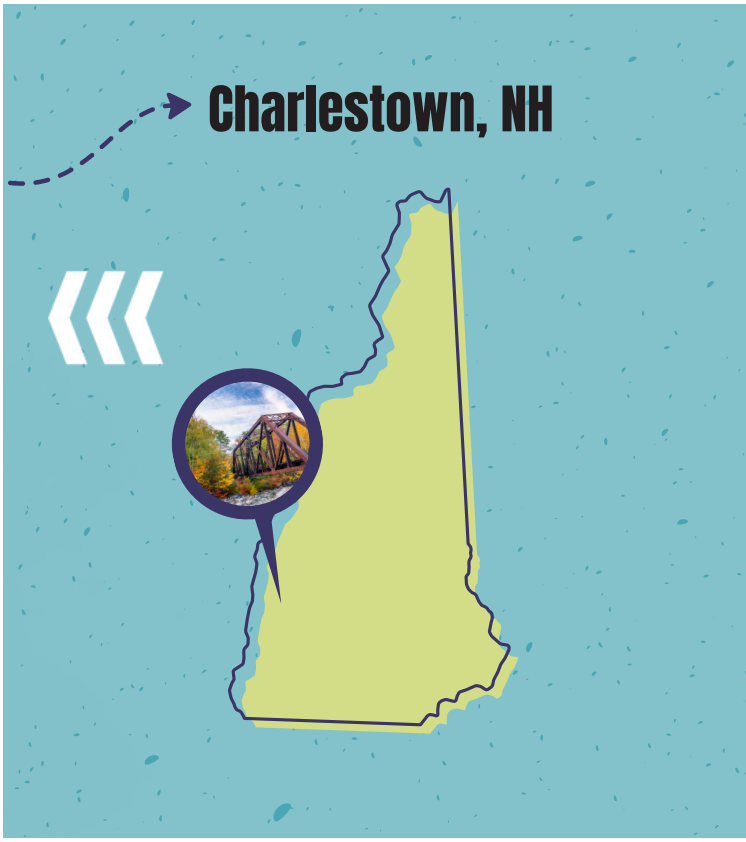
Stephy Richards

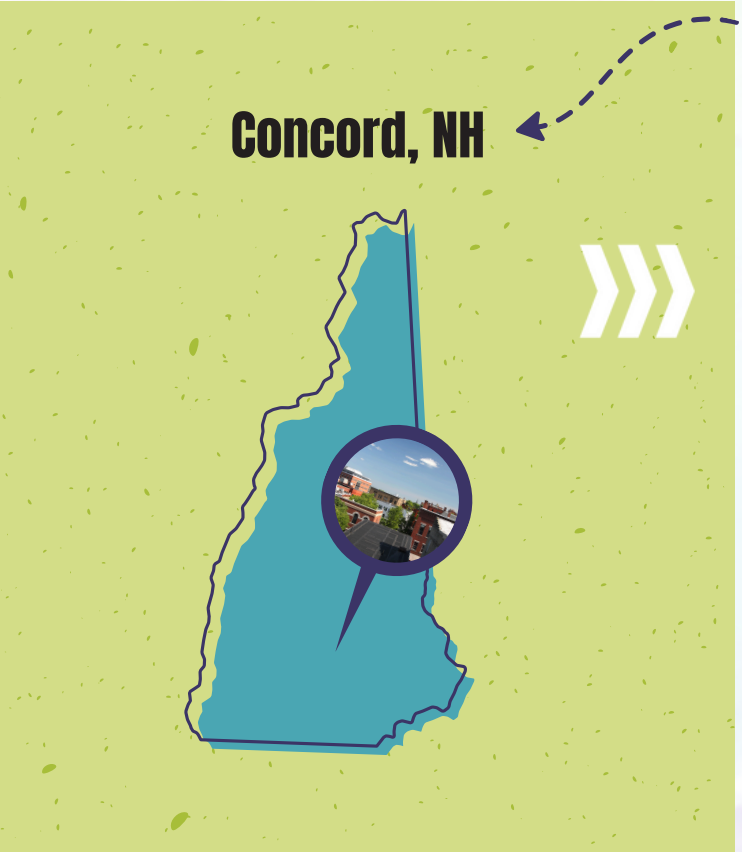
My family moved into a 263-year-old home in New Hampshire and our toddler was poisoned by lead. I had no idea that lead was such a big issue in our state until our son tested positive at a routine appointment.

It took over a year, thousands of dollars, countless visits with the EPA and DCF, and more to finally get our son's lead levels to drop.

We were almost left homeless because of this and it was really nerve-racking.

I am now dedicated to sharing our story to help other Granite Staters become aware of the harms of lead exposure.





Jena

My family has been drastically impacted by lead exposure. Two of my children have had both physical and neurodevelopmental health issues as a result of lead poisoning.

When my children were younger, we had to adjust their diets - forcing them to take iron supplements and increasing their protein intake when possible - to combat the high amounts of lead in their young bodies.

My daughter had a blood lead level of 11 µg/dL, which is well above the CDC's reference range. Now, she is in 5th grade and suffers from dyslexia, ODD, and possibly ADHD. These issues have been linked to lead exposure. My other child has sensory challenges. These issues will continue to affect my children for the rest of their lives.