



**CHILDHOOD
LEAD POISONING**
Prevention Program
Riverside County

Inland Empire Health Plan, Riverside County collaboration helps boost childhood lead screenings

Rancho Cucamonga, CA — July 9, 2026 — Childhood lead screenings in Riverside County increased by 11% in 2025, following an expanded education and outreach partnership between Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) and the Riverside University Health System - Public Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP).

The enhanced collaboration began last year after Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) measures showed that only 58.95% of children in Riverside and San Bernardino counties received lead testing in 2024.

“Riverside County’s CLPP Program was the ideal partner for this work,” said IEHP Director of Quality Management Dulce Fernandez. “Not only do they bring expertise in blood lead testing, but our collaboration also helped strengthen relationships across IEHP’s network of providers.”

HEDIS measures help IEHP and CLPPP identify care gaps and evaluate the effectiveness of programs designed to improve health outcomes over time.

Working together, the two organizations identified providers and clinics that would benefit from additional support and messaging. Their shared goal is to make lead screenings—recommended for children at 12 and 24 months, or under age 6 if no previous test is recorded—a routine part of annual pediatric checkups.

“We knew we needed to take action,” said RUHS-PH CLPPP Coordinator and Assistant Nurse Manager Evelin Hernandez. “Our expanded focus on education and outreach helps ensure more families understand the importance of testing.”

Despite the notable increase, both organizations acknowledge that barriers to lead screening remain.

“Children with lead poisoning often don’t show any symptoms right away, so a screening is essential,” said Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Jennifer Chevinsky. “Screenings allow us to detect elevated levels early, work with families to find the source and stop exposure before it causes harm.

“Together, we are making a difference in children’s lives,” she said.

Why Screening Matters

A blood test is the only way to detect lead poisoning. Without testing, elevated lead levels can go unnoticed and may contribute to long-term health issues, including challenges with learning, attention and behavior.

According to CLPPP, children may be at higher risk for lead exposure if they:

- Live in or frequently visit a home built before 1978 or near sources of lead emissions (highways, industrial sites, airports).
- Are exposed to certain foods, spices, remedies, dishware or imported products.
- Spend time outside the United States.
- Have a sibling with elevated blood lead levels.
- Live with someone who works in industries such as construction, painting or stained glass.

More information is available at go.cdph.ca.gov/LeadFreeKids or through your health care provider.

For additional resources, visit www.iehp.org or www.ruhealth.org/public-health/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention

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About IEHP

With a mission to heal and inspire the human spirit, Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) is one of the top 5 largest Medicaid health plans, the largest not-for-profit Medicare-Medicaid public health plan in the country, and for the sixth year in a row, certified as A Great Place To Work®. Founded in 1996, IEHP supports 1.4 million Riverside and San Bernardino County residents enrolled in Medicaid or IEHP DualChoice (those with both Medi-Cal and Medicare). IEHP also offers Covered California plans, further ensuring health care access for even more IE residents. Today, IEHP has a robust network of quality doctors throughout our two counties and nearly 3,800 team members who are fully committed to the vision: We will not rest until our communities enjoy optimal care and vibrant health. To learn more, go to iehp.org.

About CLPPP

The Riverside University Health System - Public Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) provides free services and resources to families, medical providers, and community-based organizations to reduce lead exposure and increase the number of children assessed and appropriately blood tested for lead poisoning. Visit our website at <https://www.ruhealth.org/public-health/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention> for more information or call 1-800-346-6520.