

**JOINT RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING ACTION TO REDUCE
THE NUMBER OF UTAH CHILDREN WITH ELEVATED
BLOOD LEAD LEVELS**

2020 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jani Iwamoto

House Sponsor: Stephen G. Handy

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This joint resolution of the Legislature highlights the pediatric health risks resulting from exposure to lead, the potential for early screening and testing to result in successful avoidance and interventions, and encourages screening and testing of Utah children.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- describes the known adverse health effects and concerns of childhood lead exposure;
- describes the known benefits of avoidance and interventions resulting from early detection of childhood lead exposure;
- encourages Utah health care providers for children, pregnant women, and women of childbearing age to be knowledgeable about the risks of environmental lead exposure and the recommended federal and state guidelines for screening and testing children for lead exposure; and
- encourages the Utah Department of Health to provide primary prevention education and to promote awareness through the dissemination of information about the health risks of childhood lead exposure, lead exposure risk factors, recommendations for



screening and testing children, and policies and practices to mitigate childhood lead exposure and health risks.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

WHEREAS, naturally occurring lead is concentrated in properties formerly used for mining purposes;

WHEREAS, lead was historically used in gasoline, plumbing, paints, and other products used by people;

WHEREAS, lead is still used in many household products, hobbies, and occupations;

WHEREAS, residential areas located on sites of former mining operations or built before 1978 are shown to be population areas of higher exposure risk for children to lead;

WHEREAS, about 50,000 children are born in Utah each year;

WHEREAS, 132 pre-school age children that were tested in 2018 had elevated blood lead levels;

WHEREAS, only 3.6% of children ages 0 to 5 years were tested in 2018;

WHEREAS, there is no known safe blood lead level;

WHEREAS, lead absorbed into the blood is known to adversely affect every organ system in the body;

WHEREAS, the adverse health effects of lead on the nervous system are particularly harmful;

WHEREAS, prevention through lead awareness education is an important approach to reducing harm to children resulting from lead exposure;

WHEREAS, for those children who are exposed and have elevated blood lead levels, mitigating further exposure is critical to preventing further harm;

WHEREAS, national public health and pediatric health care professional associations recommend that a questionnaire be administered for children from 6 months to 6 years of age for possible lead exposure;

WHEREAS, testing is the only definitive way to know if a child has been exposed to lead and that testing is recommended at ages 1 and 2 years and under the age of 6 years if never

59 tested;

60 WHEREAS, Utah Medicaid is a willing payer for the screening of Medicaid-enrolled
61 Utah children;

62 WHEREAS, it is a federal mandate that all children on Medicaid are tested at 1 and 2
63 years of age; and

64 WHEREAS, the cost of testing children is modest:

65 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature encourages pediatric
66 health care providers and providers for pregnant women and women of child-bearing age to be
67 knowledgeable about:

- 68 1. the risks of lead exposure among their served populations;
- 69 2. the recommended federal and state guidelines, including Medicaid lead screening
70 and testing requirements;
- 71 3. the reporting requirements of blood lead test results to the state of Utah; and
- 72 4. the methods and advantages of exposure prevention, risk awareness education for
73 parents, guardians or caretakers, and early interventions for children with elevated blood lead
74 levels.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature encourages the Environmental
76 Epidemiology Program of the Utah Department of Health to collaborate with child health
77 clinical professionals to develop screening plans responsive to local conditions using local
78 data.

79 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature encourages the Environmental
80 Epidemiology Program to provide and promote awareness through the dissemination of
81 primary prevention education and information about the health risks of childhood lead
82 exposure, lead exposure risk factors, recommendations for screening and testing children, and
83 policies and practices to mitigate childhood lead exposure and health risks.

84 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Utah
85 Department of Health, the Utah Medical Association, the Utah Academy of Family Physicians,
86 the Utah Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Utah Academy of Physician
87 Assistants, and Utah Nurse Practitioners.