



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Dramatic Decline in Childhood Lead Poisoning Continues - Work Still Lies Ahead to Reach 2010 Goal**

BALTIMORE, MD (July 27, 2006) – Today, the Maryland Department of the Environment released figures showing that childhood lead poisoning has decreased by 96% in Baltimore City and 94% in Maryland since 1993. The Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning (the Coalition) has lead a partnership of State agencies (MDE, DHMH, DHCD), local health departments, and community organizations for twenty years to help produce this nation leading reduction. In 1993, there were over 1,850 children lead poisoned annually in Baltimore City. In 2005, there were only 70 lead poisoned children in Baltimore City.

“This significant reduction in childhood lead poisoning is a reminder that investments in prevention can produce dramatic results for our children's health. We have proven that when you focus on a problem collectively as a community, you can overcome seemingly intractable problems. We are on the precipice of actually ending this entirely preventable disease but we cannot rest on our accomplishments. It is critical that the State and City continue to make the financial commitments necessary to insure that we do not lose this opportunity to remove a major public health problem from our society.” stated Ruth Ann Norton, Executive Director for the Coalition.

"Today, MDE will announce the 2005 report on Lead Poisoning In Maryland. As you will see, the new numbers show the progress that can be made when we, as a community, collectively determine to work together to protect our children. At the same time, it is clear that to reach our goal of ending childhood lead poisoning by 2010 much work remains. We must push for adequate funding to assure that we deliver on the promise made to our children and we must remain vigilant to enforce laws that promote Healthy Homes for all children. Our work is not done, but we can and we must prevail."

In 2000, the Coalition produced the Windows of Opportunity Comprehensive Action Plan that resulted in commitments of \$50 million dollars in funding over three years for lead poisoning prevention initiatives in Maryland and drastically accelerated the decline in lead poisoning. The Coalition will introduce an updated Comprehensive Action Plan in September, 2006, that will provide a detailed roadmap for the State of Maryland to eliminate childhood lead poisoning by the year 2010. The Action Plan will propose

additional funding for lead abatement grants, lead safe income tax credits, increased enforcement, and increased blood lead testing among other initiatives.

Childhood lead poisoning causes learning disabilities, loss of IQ, speech delays, attention deficit disorder and violent, aggressive behavior. Children poisoned by lead are 7 times more likely to drop out of school and 6 times more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system. Lead poisoning is a leading contributor to higher special education costs and juvenile justice costs in Baltimore City in particular. For more information about the Coalition and its efforts, visit [www.lead-safe.org](http://www.lead-safe.org)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Number of Children Poisoned</b>	<b>Blood Lead Level</b>	<b>Percent Decline</b>
1993	Baltimore	1,850	(20 ug/dl or higher)	
<b>2005</b>	<b>Baltimore</b>	<b>70</b>	(20 ug/dl or higher)	<b>96% Decline</b>
1993	Baltimore	12,908	(10 ug/dl or higher)	
<b>2005</b>	<b>Baltimore</b>	<b>854</b>	(10 ug/dl or higher)	<b>93% Decline</b>
1993	Maryland	1,904	(20 ug/dl or higher)	
<b>2005</b>	<b>Maryland</b>	<b>106</b>	(20 ug/dl or higher)	<b>94% Decline</b>
1993	Maryland	14,546	(10 ug/dl or higher)	
<b>2005</b>	<b>Maryland</b>	<b>1,331</b>	(10 ug/dl or higher)	<b>91% Decline</b>

Source: 2005 Maryland Department of the Environment Childhood Lead Registry

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