

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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May 10, 2010

For Immediate Release

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Health Department, NYU to Collaborate On Study “NIH Grant Will Fund Window Replacement/ Lead Reduction Impact Investigation”

The Oneida County Health Department’s *Lead Primary Prevention Program* has been asked to participate in a study funded through a grant from the National Institute of Health (NIH) that will determine the impact of window replacement on lead dust levels, Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. announced today.

Based on its large stock of pre-1978 built housing, the City of Utica is one of three sites, and the only upstate municipality outside Brooklyn and Queens, selected to take part in the study that will determine the qualitative benefits of replacing single-pane windows with new vinyl replacement windows. Other studies have shown that 60% to 70% of lead hazards in the home can be attributed to the friction dust caused by opening and closing older windows covered with lead-based paints, since as little dust as it would take to fill a sugar packet can contaminate an entire house and make it unsafe for human habitation.

“We’re pleased that Oneida County’s Lead Primary Prevention Program was selected to participate in the New York University study. Our goal is to eliminate our children’s exposure to lead dust, and we recognize that window replacement will reduce the costs of health care, early intervention and special education associated with childhood lead poisoning,” Picente said.

Dr. Michael Weitzman, Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry at NYU School of Medicine who will head up the study concurs.

“We think lead-safe window replacement will have profound benefits for our children by both reducing home energy costs and helping to eliminate childhood lead poisoning, a disease that is entirely preventable,” Weitzman said.

Weitzman and his team from NYU and the National Center for Healthy Housing will study lead dust levels in 300 housing units in the three venues’ “high risk designated areas for lead poisoning” over the next year. According to Cathe Bullwinkle, Quality Improvement Coordinator for the Oneida County Health Department, the *Lead Primary Prevention Program* will conduct visual assessments, perform dust wipe sampling and administer health assessment questionnaires as part of this study.

“While performing our primary prevention home inspections, we routinely find extremely high levels of lead dust on older window sills and troughs that can be blown into the room and throughout the house when windows are open or fans and air conditioners are in operation. Our participation in this study will add to our science-based knowledge of how children are lead poisoned and assist us in developing the most cost effective strategies for reducing the incidence of lead poisoning in pre-1978 housing,” Bullwinkle said.

For more information on the hazards of lead poisoning and lead-safe work practices visit our web site at ocgov.net or contact the Lead Primary Prevention Program at 266-6147.

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