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NEWS RELEASE

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Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Highlights Local Threat to Children

“County’s Lead Primary Prevention Expands HEPA Vac Loaner Program”

Ways to reduce the incidence of childhood lead poisoning caused by the ingestion of lead paint chips or the inhalation of lead-laden dust is the theme of *National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week*, October 24th through the 30th, Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. said today.

Oneida County has one of the highest rates of lead poisoning in New York State due to the condition of its aged housing stock impacting the children who live there by causing permanent brain damage, learning disabilities, ADHD and behavioral problems. This often results in school failures and a higher percentage of drop outs. Early intervention can reduce social service and health costs. Picente said the County remains aggressive in its approach to stemming the tide of childhood lead poisoning in Oneida County.

“Protecting our children from the hazards of lead common in pre-1978 housing has been a high priority of my administration; and while it may take years to provide adequate lead safe housing in our community, there are measures we can take now to reduce children’s risks of lead poisoning, including insisting that rental property owners replace or repair older windows and chipping and peeling lead paint and ensuring the work is performed by EPA certified contractors using lead safe work practices,” Picente said.

Picente added that we all share in the responsibility and tenants, particularly those with children, need to do their part by conducting regular cleaning to reduce lead dust hazards. He said the County, through its Lead Primary Prevention Program, has, and will continue to assist residents in that task.

“While the cost of commercial grade HEPA vacuums is prohibitive for many inner-city families, these cleaners, capable of removing up to 99.97% of lead dust in the home, are available for use at no cost through the County’s Lead Primary Prevention Program. And due to a growing demand, the County LPPP is purchasing an additional six vacuums to add to its current inventory of thirteen,” Picente said.

All the vacuums were purchased through the NYSDOH Lead Primary Prevention program and a generous contribution from Excellus BlueCross BlueShield and are available to Oneida County residents on a loan basis by calling the Lead Primary Prevention Program at 266-6147.

Dr. Gayle Jones, Oneida County Director of Health, emphasizes the importance of bringing home the message warning of the hazards of lead poisoning and educating the public on ways to prevent it must go beyond this week.

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"As long as childhood lead poisoning remains a public health threat in Oneida County, children's health, education and employment opportunities will be impacted across their life spans resulting in higher taxes for residents to cover the costs of healthcare, special education and social services. Parents should be reminded to have their children tested for lead at one year and again at age two. Those living in houses with chipped and peeling paint are encouraged to have their children tested as early as 6-months and until 6-years of age. Through a cooperative community effort we can end Oneida County's lead poisoning problem."

For information on childhood lead poisoning, lead-safe work practices and more, visit our web site at ocgov.net and click on "Lead Information," or contact the Oneida County Health Department's Lead Primary Prevention Program at 266-6147.

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