



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 13, 2017

For additional information contact:

Lisa LaPlante at (616) 632-7567 or Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov

Lt. Governor Calley to Meet with County Lead Task Force July 19

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – Lt. Governor Brian Calley, who chaired Michigan's Child Lead Poisoning Elimination Board after actively working to help Flint recover from its water crisis, will speak at the Kent County Lead Task Force meeting on Wednesday, July 19, 2017 in the Kent County Board of Commissioners' Chambers, 300 Monroe NW in Grand Rapids, at 1 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

Board Chair Jim Saalfeld formed the Lead Task Force in September 2016 to investigate the issue of lead in Kent County and to seek solutions to address and reduce lead poisoning in children. One zip code in Grand Rapids led the state for the highest number of lead-poisoned children in 2015 according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services: 49507 (south of Franklin, east of US-131, north of 28th Street). Four out of five homes in Grand Rapids, and nearly three out of five homes in Kent County, were built before 1978, the year lead was banned from paint.

"To truly protect Michigan children from lead, we must proactively address lead hazard before exposure occurs," said Lt. Gov. Brian Calley. "The Child Lead Poisoning Elimination Board developed a comprehensive roadmap for how this issue can be addressed across the state and I am glad to see that Kent County has made this issue a priority as well."

The Lead Task Force, chaired by Commissioner Emily Brieve and Vice-Chair Senita Lenear (Commissioner, City of Grand Rapids) includes more than a dozen community leaders, as well as health and housing specialists. "The lead crisis in Kent County is different from that in Flint, where water contamination is to blame, yet the outcomes for our children are the same," said Commissioner Brieve. "We are looking at ways to address this through actions, policies and programs. This collaboration of experts and building partnerships with community agencies is a step towards making homes safer for our youth."

"Since the formation of the Kent County Lead Poisoning Task Force last year, our members have heard from several experts in various fields surrounding the issues of childhood lead poisoning," said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer at the Kent County Health Department. "Lieutenant Governor Calley's experience with the Child Lead Poisoning Elimination Board and the Flint crisis will provide valuable insight to this committee as it works to complete its report."

Lead poisoning can cause permanent, irreversible damage to many organs, including the heart, brain, and liver. It's also linked to lower IQs, hyperactivity, and aggressive behavior. The CDC estimates that nearly half a million children in the US have elevated blood lead levels (a blood lead level of 5 micrograms per deciliter or higher).

The Kent County Lead Task Force hopes to have a report completed by the end of the year.

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