

## **Knox County Community Health Coalition Wins State Contract - Continues Work with Landlords and Families to Prevent Lead Poisoning**

Rockport—Knox County Community Health Coalition (KCCHC), a local Healthy Maine Partnership will continue its efforts to prevent childhood lead poisoning in Knox County, and Public Health District 4 in the greater Midcoast Region. This is thanks to a contract from Maine’s Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund.

The contract provides resources for KCCHC to go out into the community to protect the children most at risk for lead poisoning. KCCHC’s prevention activities are focused on landlords who own old buildings as well as the parents of young children who live in those older rental units.

The reason for targeting these two groups is that data from Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention show that in Rockland and areas in Sagadahoc County, a percentage of children poisoned by lead live in rental housing.

“A lot of progress has been made since the first lead poisoning prevention contract was awarded in 2009,” said Nancy Laite, Lead Poison Prevention Specialist at KCCHC. “Initially the program was being built, and community needs were being assessed. Next steps will be going into units with landlords, testing for lead dust, and teaching them how to deal with lead paint – before a child is poisoned. This is revolutionary as far as lead poisoning prevention in the Midcoast goes. We haven’t been able to do this until now.”

Dust from lead paint that was commonly used in houses and buildings built before 1950, and in some houses built before 1978, is by far the leading cause of childhood lead poisoning in Maine. As leaded paint gets old and breaks down, lead dust can build up on window sills and floors where children often put their hands, mouths, and toys.

For young children, lead poisoning can cause very serious and long-term health effects like behavior problems, learning disabilities, speech and language delays and lower intelligence. Often there are no signs or symptoms of illness that can alert a parent to a problem.

“Lots of parents and property owners in our community don’t know about lead. That’s why this lead poisoning prevention contract is so important. It gives us at the local level the resources we need to help our community keep our kids safe from the dangers of lead paint,” concluded Laite.

Anyone interested in Knox County Community Health Coalition’s lead poisoning prevention services, including free lead dust testing for rental units can call 236-6313, or email Laite at [nllaite2@myfairpoint.net](mailto:nllaite2@myfairpoint.net) for more information.

### ***About the Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund***

*In 2005, the 122<sup>nd</sup> Maine Legislature established the Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund (LPPF or 22 MRSA c.252 §1322-E). Revenue for the LPPF comes from a \$0.25 per*

*gallon fee imposed on manufacturers or wholesalers of paint sold in Maine. The LPPF was established to provide resources to support lead poisoning prevention education, outreach and training programs. The Fund has been awarding contracts to community organizations for lead poisoning prevention activities since 2009, for a total of \$893,250. In the coming years, the Fund will continue its work to eliminate lead poisoning through community contracts and other prevention strategies, and will complete a comprehensive evaluation of its activities. For more information: [maine.gov/healthyhomes](http://maine.gov/healthyhomes).*