



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Indiana Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report**

### ***Environmental Injustice: Lead Poisoning in Indiana***

The Indiana Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has released a comprehensive report, "[Environmental Injustice: Lead Poisoning in Indiana](#)," which focuses on lead exposure and lead poisoning's disparate impact on Indiana's children of color. The report was informed by public testimony presented at briefings on April 30, 2019; May 3, 2019; November 16, 2019; and February 27, 2020; as well as public discussions on May 28, 2020 and September 9, 2020. Primary areas examined included: civil rights concerns relating to lead exposure sources; the medical and economic impact of lead poisoning on children and their families; and policy strategies to prevent what is an entirely preventable, and costly, problem that disproportionately and irreversibly harms Indiana's children of color.

The Committee heard substantial testimony urging policy makers to promote proactive remedies to prevent lead poisoning, rather than reactive responses to decrease harm already overwhelmingly experienced by Indiana's communities of color who live, work, and play in environmentally hazardous areas. Recommendations include requiring blood lead testing to match CDC guidelines; increasing testing, particularly of Indiana's Medicaid recipients who are primarily Black and Latinx; and reporting data on lead testing by race and ethnicity so racial disparities are identified and addressed. Additional recommendations include enforcing federal grant requirements, and developing local, state, and federal inter-agency collaboration models to streamline efforts around testing, billing, reporting, data collection, resource provision, and medical and environmental interventions.

Committee Chair Diane Clements-Boyd said, "The testimony revealed that it is well documented that lead exposure causes permanent and irreversible damage in children. While government has intervened to mitigate lead contamination, communities of color continue to bear the greatest burden stemming from the state's practices of racial segregation. This report calls for state, local and federal government agencies to take every measure to ensure that all Hoosier children do not continue to suffer from the effects of lead poisoning. Ideally, a collaboration of government agencies will convene to identify and address the legacy of racial environmental injustice in Indiana and facilitate swift and effective prevention and intervention protocols and strategies to alleviate the harm."

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For information about the Commission, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).