

Lake County Community Health Program FACT SHEET

April 2009



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

Understanding Proposed Changes to the Lake County Community Health Program/Kids First

Public Comment Opportunity

A public comment period on the Lake County Community Health Program Phase 2 Work Plan will be open from **April 2 to May 4, 2009**. You can submit written comments on the proposed work plan during this time period.

EPA also will host a public comment meeting : **6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.**
Wednesday, April 22, 2009
National Mining Museum & Hall of Fame, Longyear Auditorium.
120 West 9th, Leadville
(please use 10th Street entrance)

You can view a copy of the work plan by visiting EPA's website at www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/ (click on Colorado and then California Gulch). Or you can obtain a copy at EPA's information repository at the Lake County Library, 1115 Harrison Ave., at the Colorado Mountain College Library or at the Lake County Clerk's Office.

Comment letters must be postmarked or emailed by **May 4th, 2009** and should be submitted to:

Jennifer Lane, Community Involvement
EPA Region 8, 80C
1595 Wynkoop
Denver, CO 80202-1129
Email: lane.jennifer@epa.gov
Phone: 1-800-227-8917, ext. 312-6813
Fax: 303-312-7110

Original Program Met Performance Goals

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and Lake County are proposing to modify the Lake County Community Health Program (known in the community as Kids First). This modification is possible because performance goals for residential areas of the California Gulch Superfund Site were met in 2006. The Lake County Community Health Program was the remedy selected in 1999 to address residential soils as part of the California Gulch Superfund cleanup (Operable Unit 9). Large Superfund sites like California Gulch are often divided into smaller areas, called operable units, to make investigation and cleanup more manageable.

The agencies have developed a work plan that describes the modified program, called the Lake County Community Health Program Phase 2. The proposed work plan is the result of meetings between Lake County, the City of Leadville, EPA and CDPHE. The agencies are seeking public comment on this proposed work plan.

This new program transitions the Kids First Program, the residential soils remedy, into the operations and maintenance phase. In addition, the modified program will serve as the institutional control for the residential portion of the site. Institutional controls, also known as community protective measures, are necessary any time a remedy involves leaving wastes in place, in this case mining wastes.

What is the goal of the modified program and who will be responsible?

The goal of the Lake County Community Health Program Phase 2 is to maintain the progress that has been made in reducing overall lead-related risk to children and pregnant and nursing women who live in Leadville through educa-

tion, blood-lead monitoring of children, investigation when elevated blood lead is detected, and a cleanup response, if appropriate.

Due to Asarco's bankruptcy, Lake County, EPA and CDPHE have taken responsibility for implementing the Phase 2 work plan. A work group with representatives of Lake County, CDPHE and EPA will oversee the program and will decide what to do whenever an elevated blood lead level is identified. Lake County will be responsible for most aspects of program administration. The Lake County Public Health Agency will monitor blood-lead concentrations in individual children who live within the county, including providing free blood-lead testing and educational material to families regarding how to prevent lead exposure. CDPHE will perform environmental sampling and cleanup when it is recommended by the work group.

How is the new program different?

Several parts of the original program will continue with only minor changes. These activities include blood-lead monitoring, community education and outreach. The most significant change is that residential environmental sampling and cleanup for soil, dust and paint will be offered: only 1) when children or pregnant/nursing mothers living at a property have blood-lead levels at or above the Center for Disease Control's level of concern, currently 10 micrograms per deciliter, or 2) at the specific recommendation of either the work group or the Lake County Public Health Agency.

The original program allowed residents to request environmental sampling with no preconditions. This service is no longer available. Under the proposed changes, the work group may not offer environmental sampling if preliminary investigation indicates the source of lead exposure is solely from household items such as consumer goods, toys, candy, etc. Environmental sampling and cleanup would be performed if deemed necessary by the work group and only with the consent of the resident and/or property owner.

Other major differences include:

- Sampling and evaluation will no longer be available for plumbing fixtures (EPA determined that this was not a significant source of lead exposure).
- The HEPA-filter vacuum loan program will be discontinued, because it presents complex administrative and managerial challenges.
- CDPHE will manage environmental data; reporting responsibilities will be shared with Lake County. Asarco previously managed his task.

Why was the original program developed?

The original Lake County Community Health Program/Kids First was developed to reduce the risk of lead exposure to young children from residential soils contaminated with lead and other heavy metals from nearby mining. Funding by Asarco made it possible to address other sources of lead not necessarily linked to mining wastes, such as paint, plumbing and consumer products. EPA, CDPHE, Asarco, Lake County and Leadville leaders agreed on the remedy as an alternative to site-wide residential soil removal.

What are the health effects of lead?

High levels of lead in blood can damage the nervous system, kidneys and reproductive system. The effects are the same whether lead is breathed or swallowed. Small children are particularly vulnerable because of their tendency to mouth objects in and around the home, play in dirt, and lick their fingers.

Does this mean the soil at my house is now safe?

Performance standards set by the EPA for the original program were met in 2006. However, residents could still encounter lead-contaminated soils above the levels EPA and CDPHE consider safe. Property owners were given a final chance to have their properties investigated and cleaned up after performance standards of the old program were met. All properties within the impacted area were not investigated and cleaned up if needed. There remains a possibility that some properties still have elevated lead levels in their yards. This is especially a concern for families who will move to Leadville in the future. The good news is that there have been substantially fewer children with elevated blood-lead levels in recent years. Because there are multiple sources of lead (paint, toys, candy from other countries, etc.), it can sometimes be difficult to pinpoint a source.

What are the educational components of the new plan?

Because education is an effective way to prevent exposure, an education-based plan involving continued blood-lead monitoring is proposed as the institutional control for the residential portion of the Superfund site. Under the modified program, Lake County will provide information to residents and families with children to promote ongoing community awareness of health risks from lead exposures. Information will be supplied in a number of ways including periodic public notices in the newspaper, brochures in physicians' offices, and hand-outs to parents when children are immunized by the Lake County Public Health Agency. As part of the

modified program, Lake County will provide counseling and education to families who participate in the modified program's blood-lead monitoring program. Outreach efforts will be similar to the old program and will use existing materials. The work group will review and update materials as needed. Some materials will be translated into Spanish. After the modified program is finalized, EPA will do an initial mailing to inform property owners and residents of the changes.

Who will pay for the program?

Funding for the Lake County Community Health Program Phase 2 will be provided by a trust fund established by Asarco as part of a 1994 consent decree to implement residential remediation activities and provide for the costs of managing lead that re-

mains in residential areas. Approximately \$5.4 million is in the fund.

How can I find out if a property has been remediated?

CDPHE is developing a record system for the County that will identify all properties where soil sampling and/or remediation have occurred. In the meantime, citizens should contact Jennifer Lane at EPA Region 8 in Denver, 1-800-227-8917, ext. 312-6813 (toll-free) or email at lane.jennifer@epa.gov.

For More Information:

Lake County Public Health

Nursing Service

(719) 486-0118

Call for information about free blood-lead testing for children under age 6, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

Board of County Commissioners

Ken Olsen, Chair (719) 486-4102

Email: klolsen@amigo.net

Environmental Protection Agency

Stanley Christensen, Project Manager

(800) 227-8917, extension 312-6694

E-mail: christensen.stanley@epa.gov

Jennifer Lane, Community Involvement

(800) 227-8917, extension 312-6813

E-mail: lane.jennifer@epa.gov

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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Warren Smith, Community Involvement Mgr.

(303) 692-3373

E-mail: warren.smith@state.co.us

Information is also available at:

EPA's Web Site:

www.epa.gov/region08/superfund/co/calgulch

Lake County Library

1115 Harrison Ave.

Leadville, CO 80461

Colorado Mountain College Library

Leadville, CO 80461

Lake County Clerk's Office

Leadville, CO 80461

EPA Superfund Records Center

1595 Wynkoop St.

Denver, CO 80202-1129

(800) 227-8917, extension 312-6473



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