

Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition

Community Engagement Matters:
Unlocking the Door to a Healthy Home
through a Community Lens

OHHN

Spring Forum



NORTHEAST OHIO
Black Health Coalition

Educate, Advocate, Empower

Introduction

Working to educate, advocate for and empower the community is more than just dropping in. This session will highlight why culturally proficient community engagement matters.

Mission

The Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition's mission is to address disparities and inequities in education, employment, housing and health and the impact on African American health disparities by working to educate, advocate for and empower the community.

African American Experience in the US

- Historical lens (Video)

<http://www.nationalcollaborative.org/environmental-racism-is-the-new-jim-crow/>

- 246 years as slaves, 99 years under Jim Crow...these two periods account for 87% of the African American Experience
- 13% of the African American experience is after the Civil Rights Act...and even since then we have not been treated fairly.

Racism

Institutional racism (institutionalized racism) is a form of racism expressed in the practice of social and political institutions. It is reflected in disparities regarding criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power and education, among other things. Institutional racism occurs when a certain group is targeted and discriminated against based upon race. Institutional racism can go unnoticed as it is not always explicit and can be overlooked.

What this means?

- We have to change the way we engage the African American communities
- Relationships take time
- Trust is developed over time
- You can't change who you are but you can understand who your audience is
- Be willing to talk about systemic racism
- Social workers and other health providers have long recognized the need to provide culturally sensitive programs to enhance the awareness among ethnic groups.

What this means?

- Seek out ways to get involved with NEOBHC and other community level partnerships
- Seek ways to advocate for funding of African American organizations
- Create ways to improve the cultural and linguistic competency and the diversity of the health related workforce
- No more “for us without us”
- “ Insist on being included in conversations and planning about how to fix black communities or problems that exist in black communities
- “ Stop allowing leadership to take a Missionary approach to fixing us

Waiting for Environmental Justice

Environmental toxins and pollutants know no class or race, and yet government policies and corporate activities place an undue burden on the health of the poor and communities of color.

- 4 children test positive each day
- Rates are twice that of Flint, Michigan
- 93.5% of Cleveland Kindergartners tested positive for lead in recent years
- More than 40% of students in some Cleveland schools have elevated levels of lead poisoning
- 90% of the homes in Cleveland have lead in them



LEAD SAFE CLEVELAND

Making Cleveland Lead Safe Now

Lead is a “Health problem that has a Housing solution”

Katrina Korfmacher, Ph.D., director of the Community Outreach and Engagement Core
University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC)

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/news/story/3823/local-laws-key-to-reducing-dangers-of-lead-poisoning.aspx>

What's the current approach to lead poisoning

Cleveland Lead Safe Network

*In Cleveland this is
what we use for a
lead hazard detector*



*Let's find the lead in
his house before he
gets it in his blood.*

For more information on lead poisoning contact:
Cleveland Lead Safe Network
(216) 359-1060

PossibleWall.com

Children in high risk areas are required to be tested at 1 and 2 years of age.

Findings of EBLL referred to Ohio Department of Health.

ODH refers cases back to City of Cleveland Health Department. (CHD)

Counseling and Findings...but no enforcement.

What we propose



- Owners of pre-1978 rental housing will be required to contract with a state licensed Lead Risk Assessor (LRA) to conduct an assessment of the property.
- Owners are required to remediate lead hazards identified by the LRA and pass a dust clearance test.
- Owners then register with the City's Rental Registration program as a lead safe unit.
- Owners required to do periodic lead clearance testing to assure that the property continues to be lead safe.

Our History

In 2016 Cleveland Lead Safe Network formed as an all-volunteer advocacy organization in support of a lead safe housing approach to Cleveland's Lead Poisoning Crisis

During 2016 and 2017, CLSN members reached out local health, housing, children serving, human service, faith and civic organizations for support of a lead safe housing approach. None chose to join our efforts. Members researched lead safe housing programs across the country and brought in experts to quarterly public meetings.

In 2017, Councilman Jeff Johnson introduced an ordinance to Cleveland City Council that would implement the basic principles of Lead Safe Housing for Cleveland. Despite assurances from City Council leaders, there was never a hearing on the proposed ordinance.

Our strategy

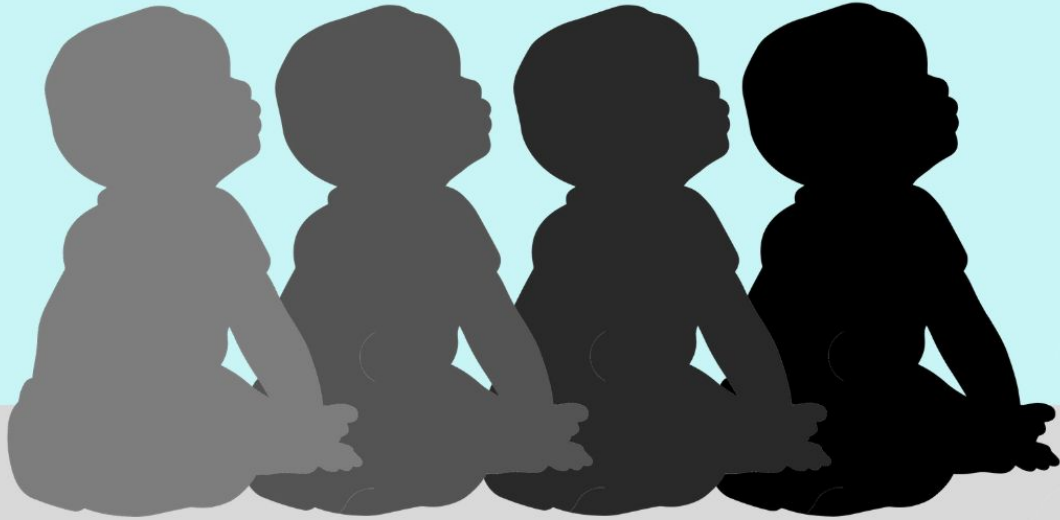
In late 2018, CLSN joined with eight other community based organizations to create Cleveland Lead Action for Safe Housing (CLASH) committed to sponsoring a citizen initiative petition to force City Council to consider our lead safe housing proposal.

Using volunteer legal assistance, CLASH revised the Jeff Johnson ordinance based on feedback that we had received from community members and experts in the field of childhood lead poisoning and CLASH created the Lead Safe Housing Initiative.

In February 2019, CLASH initiated a petition signing campaign to put the ordinance before City Council this summer and...if they fail to act, to put the issue before the voters in November. All volunteer, self-funded, and totally engaged.

Every day,

4 of Cleveland's children
are diagnosed
with lead poisoning



CLASH needs your support

Sign a petition if you are a registered voter in
the city of Cleveland

Circulate a petition if you are registered voter
in Ohio.

Make a donation to CLASH CLE PAC

What are the possible outcomes of our campaign?



- The CLASH initiative has already brought forward a new City sponsored coalition which promises action.
- City Council will be required to consider our ordinance or
- Voters will adopt our ordinance at the polls.

Win-win-win

What are the Benefits of a Lead Safe Housing Ordinance?

- Cleveland's pre 78 rental units are tested and certified lead safe.
- Fewer Cleveland children are poisoned.
- A grassroots industry of lead testing and remediation is created.
- Health expenditures for treatment are reduced.
- School performance is improved.
- Crime is reduced.



CLASH vs LSCC Ordinance

1 Proposed Ordinance 747-19 relies exclusively on criminal penalties, while the CLASH legislation relies on combined civil and criminal penalties. If passed as written, Proposed Ordinance 747-19 will likely be struck down as unconstitutional due to its penalty structure.

CLASH vs LSCC Ordinance

2 Proposed Ordinance 747-19 will not create a lead safe housing mandate for all homes until March 1, 2023. The CLASH legislation creates a lead safe housing mandate for all homes as of March 1, 2021

3 Proposed Ordinance 747-19 does not address daycare centers in the City of Cleveland, whereas the CLASH legislation ties the lead safety process to daycare registration under Chapter 227 of the City of Cleveland Codified Ordinances.

CLASH vs LSCC Ordinance

IV Proposed Ordinance 747-19 does not require the Mayor to include renters, healthcare professionals, or those directly affected by lead poisoning on a Lead Advisory Board. The CLASH legislation does

V Proposed Ordinance 747-19 does not require lead risk assessments, and instead allows clearance examinations to be used at any stage of the process. The CLASH legislation requires lead risk assessments to be used for initial determinations of lead safety.

CLASH vs LSCC Ordinance

VI Proposed Ordinance 747-19 does not have all of the protections included in the CLASH legislation

CLASH vs LSCC Ordinance

Conclusion

In sum, while these bills have similar goals at the outset and some similar provisions, there are key differences the public needs to be aware of when considering whether Proposed Ordinance 747-19 is the best fit for Cleveland's children.

For all the differences I have identified in the legislation, there's one difference that should not matter: how this bill gets passed. Whether through City Council or through a ballot initiative, the most important thing is that Cleveland constructs legislation that protects kids in the best way we know how. I hope that by highlighting key differences between CLASH's legislation the Proposed Ordinance 747-19, I have contributed to this goal.

The Work Continues...

Why CLASH is out collecting signatures again even after the city introduced legislation. Legislation has a process that includes hearings and changes. Which means the realtor association and other people that don't live in Cleveland can strong arm the city into watering down the current legislation which already has serious gaps. Without CLASH continuing our efforts to force the city into compliance our babies will continue to be poisoned. Daycares, tenant and landlord protections are not in the city legislation. The timeline allows children in non priority areas to not be protected. CLASH is collecting signatures because we know what happens to legislation when the city thinks nobody is watching. It becomes absolute garbage. CLASH is here and will be here making sure that the city recognizes our children's lives as priority number one WHY because OUR BABIES MATTER

Thanks!

We welcome your questions and suggestions.

Presenters:

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Spencer Wells, community manager, Cleveland Lead Safe Network.

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