

July 23, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell:

The undersigned 8 medical and public health organizations write in strong support of \$45 billion in federal funding to fully replace all lead service lines in the nation. This investment in public health would improve the lives of millions by eliminating one of the major exposure routes to lead contamination. We urge you to fully fund this proposed public health measure with \$45 billion.

Our organizations have worked tirelessly to protect the public from lead poisoning. Lead is a potent and irreversible neurotoxin for which there is no safe level. It is particularly harmful to children, and is linked to brain and nervous system damage as well as learning disabilities and behavioral disorders. Lead poisoning is harmful to adults as well, where it causes cardiovascular and kidney damage. Unfortunately, millions of people across the country are still subject to these hazards even though the risks have been known for decades. Due to structural racism and discriminatory housing policies, lead exposure disproportionately impacts communities of color and exacerbates health disparities. Congress banned the use of new lead pipes in 1986 but much of the legacy infrastructure remains in place today. In fact, an estimated 10 million households may still rely on lead pipes to deliver drinking water to families. It is time to complete the important work that Congress began 35 years ago.

Replacing all lead service lines would prevent lead exposure through drinking water before it occurs and yield tremendous public health benefits. Future generations would no longer suffer avoidable exposure from hazardous pipes that are used to deliver drinking water. This reduction in exposure can be expected to contribute to reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, behavioral and learning disabilities, and other adverse effects of in-utero and early childhood exposures. This primary prevention approach to eliminate risks through our water system will be most effective when combined with simultaneous efforts to eliminate other important lead exposure

pathways like paint, dust, school plumbing, and soil contamination, on which continued Congressional and regulatory progress is also necessary.

Congress's commitment to this issue presents a significant opportunity to address an important part of a public health problem that has persisted for too long. We urge you to include the full \$45 billion for lead service line replacement as you work to enact comprehensive legislation to invest in infrastructural improvements. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you to protect the nation's public health.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Public Health Association

Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health

Children's Environmental Health Network

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National League for Nursing

National WIC Association

Public Health Institute