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Rep. Taylor: Proposes lead safety measures to protect Wisconsin children

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Flint, MI Physician joins call for policies to protect children

MADISON – Today, Rep. Chris Taylor (D-Madison) joined Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, the physician who revealed the Flint, Michigan water crisis, in calling for more rigorous lead safety standards to protect Wisconsin children and for the passage of a package of child lead safety initiatives.

In many parts of Wisconsin, child lead poisoning rates exceed those in Flint, Michigan at the height of the lead poisoning crisis experienced in that community. Lead poisoning of children impacts republicans and democrats, and rural, urban and suburban Wisconsin areas, including the cities of Watertown, Racine, and Menasha, and the counties of Buffalo, Green Lake, Pepin, Richland, and Rock. Last year, Rep. Taylor discovered that Wisconsin's lead poisoning standards were dangerously out-of-date, and double the recommended national standards.

"The consequences of lead poisoning are devastating for children, and include a lifetime of cognitive and physical impairments that cost the state billions of dollars. Children under age 6 are especially susceptible, and can experience a lifetime of irreversible consequences. We need all hands on deck to address this crisis, which is why I'm introducing several common-sense bills that come at this issue from

many angles. Lead poisoning will continue to remain a public health crisis until we take meaningful steps to address this epidemic and make sure our children are safe."

Rep. Taylor calls on her colleagues to join her in:

- Updating outdated lead poisoning standards and including water testing in environmental assessments when a child is lead-poisoned, triggering lead investigations and remediation.
- Requiring DHS to promulgate rules directing facilities serving children under 6, including schools and daycares, to test for lead and share results with parents.
- Directing DHS and DNR to apply for federal lead remediation funding.
- Making replacing lead-contaminated windows and lead services lines eligible for the historic rehabilitation tax credit.

Dr. Hanna-Attisha, who discovered the connection between the lead poisoning of her young patients with their water source, concurred that the consequences of doing nothing are too tragic and permanent to ignore. Dr. Hanna-Attisha emphasized, "Flint has taught us many lessons; most importantly, that policy has not caught up with science. Science teaches us that there is no safe level of lead, yet children throughout our nation continue to suffer disproportionately from the life-altering consequences of preventable lead exposure. I applaud Rep. Taylor and the Wisconsin legislature for recognizing the tangible return on investment and societal value of the proposed lead elimination legislation. It will undoubtedly be reaped by generations of Wisconsin children."

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