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COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

March 9, 2016

The Honorable
Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street – Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Expanded Lead Poisoning Prevention Services

Dear Honorable Members:

The Erie County Department of Health currently operates three robust lead poisoning prevention programs (Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention, Child Lead Poisoning Prevention, and Lead Hazard Control). Since 2008 and through the end of 2015, the Department of Health has inspected 12,733 homes, and overseen the remediation of nearly 1,000 homes per year in the City of Buffalo. In addition, the Department of Environment and Planning has overseen the remediation of another 500 other homes in municipalities as varied as Angola, Colden, Tonawanda, West Seneca and Lackawanna.

Unfortunately, the Buffalo metropolitan region's older housing stock which has extensive lead paint presents an intractable problem: there are simply not enough sanitarians and support staff to inspect as many housing units as we would like, or provide expanded case management of children who have low but still potentially harmful levels of lead in their blood. In addition, many municipalities do not inspect properties for the presence of lead paint on walls, doors, windows and windowsills, the most common locations for such exposure.

I believe that our community can do more to address this issue. Therefore, in the attached resolution, I am proposing and requesting legislative authorization to appropriate $750,000, starting in 2016, to add more inspectors, case management professionals, and to purchase other equipment necessary to help address the problem.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Health Commissioner Gale R. Burstein, MD. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

bqs
Enclosure

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Health
Re: Expanded Lead Poisoning Prevention Services
Date: March 9, 2016

SUMMARY

Authorization is requested to fund eight (8) new positions and various support costs in the Erie County Department of Health's Division of the Public Health Lab which oversees Environmental Health.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The total cost of this proposal is estimated at $750,000 annually. Funds are available through the 2015 end-year surplus via the general fund. Funds in 2016 will be made available through a designation and rollover of 2015 funds into 2016.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The goal of this proposal is to supplement Erie County's existing lead programs with additional resources to increase the number of properties the Erie County Department of Health can inspect each year, and to provide better intervention for children with lower blood lead level elevations still deemed potentially harmful (5-9 mcg/dl). Since 2001 Erie County has seen a 41.3% reduction in cases of children with elevated blood levels of 10 mcg/dl or higher (from 496 in 2001 to 291 in 2015). Unfortunately many more children have elevated blood levels below 10 mcg/dl with 2,034 testing positive in 2014. Approximately 4.6% of Erie County children under 6 years old (those most vulnerable to lead poisoning) suffer from elevated blood lead levels.

This expanded services proposal would fund the following staff and materials:

Senior Investigation Public Health Sanitarian. One (1) position. This day-to-day program supervisor will manage new staff, coordinate referral of properties for inspection, and assist in enforcement action including serving as a liaison to housing court.

Investigating Public Health Sanitarian. Five (5) positions. These positions are the field staff who will supplement the existing grant funded inspectors. They will identify units county-wide with lead hazards, prepare violation notices, respond to referrals, and work closely with existing program staff to visit homes and provide intervention for children with elevated blood lead levels 5-14 mcg/dl.

Principal Clerk. One (1) position. These programs generate a great amount of paperwork. This clerk will prepare court documents, mail notices, etc.

Registered Nurse. One (1) position. This nurse will be dedicated to providing case-management for children with lower but still dangerous blood lead level elevations of 5-9 and will help put Erie County ahead of the curve.

Lead Safe Work Materials. $20,000 per year will be allocated for primer, plastic, Tyvek suits, etc. so property owners *outside* of lead primary target zip codes can remediate lead paint issues on their own.

Window Fund. Funds not utilized in earlier years of the program (due to lower steps and lower fringe rates) will be allocated towards a fund to provide low interest loans or grants for window replacement based on a sliding income scale. Windows are often the number one source of lead poisoning in a home.

Assorted Expenses. Various additional costs like office supplies, mileage, IT services and equipment will be needed as well.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The Erie County Department of Health would be limited in its ability to perform lead poisoning primary prevention outside of target ZIP codes in the City of Buffalo, and would be limited in its ability to perform intervention in cases where a child's blood elevation level was below 10 mcg/dl.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Health Department will work with the Division of Budget and Management, the Department of Personnel and the Comptroller's Office to implement this request.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

RE: Expanded Lead Poisoning Prevention Services

WHEREAS, lead paint was used predominantly throughout the 20th Century until its ban in 1978; and

WHEREAS, the City of Buffalo and its surrounding metro area have the 3rd oldest housing stock in the United States leading to a wide proliferation of lead paint and lead paint dust; and

WHEREAS, the dangers of lead poisoning are well documented and researched; and

WHEREAS, lead poisoning in children may lead to developmental delay, learning difficulties, and a permanent reduction in IQ; and

WHEREAS, 9 zip codes in Erie County have been identified by the New York State Department of Health and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as having elevated risks for lead exposure including 14201, 14207, 14208, 14209, 14210, 14211, 14212, 14213, and 14215; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Department of Health operates three grant-funded programs to find sources of lead poisoning, case-manage children with elevated blood-lead levels, and remediate lead paint from homes occupied by children; and

WHEREAS, additional county resources will allow the Erie County Department of Health to provide additional lead services in areas outside of designated target ZIP codes and to children with elevated blood lead levels of less than 10 mcg/dl.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature hereby authorizes the creation of one full time position of Senior Investigating Public Health Sanitarian JG 10, Step 0 ($40,402 annual salary) in the CSEA bargaining unit (B-100 #8653) and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature herby authorizes the creation of five full time positions of Investigating Public Health Sanitarian JG 8 Step 0 ($35,025 annual salary) in the CSEA bargaining unit (B-100 #8654); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature herby authorizes the creation of one full time position of Principal Clerk JG 7, Step 0, ($32,616 annual salary) in the CSEA bargaining unit (B-100 #8655); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature herby authorizes the creation of one full time position of Registered Nurse JG 8, Step 0 ($49,541 annual salary) in the NYSNA bargaining unit (B-100 #8656); and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby provided to transfer in 2015 an amount totaling $750,000 to expense designated for the Health Department and then to reappropriate such funding into the 2016 Budget as follows:

Fund 110 - 2016 Budget
12730 – Public Health Lab Division

Expense Accounts	Increase
500000 Full Time Salaries	$ 223,263
502000 Fringe Benefits	133,958
501000 Overtime	20,000
50500 Office Supplies	2,000
505800 Medical and Health Supplies	27,000
980000 ID DISS Services	3,000
510000 Local Mileage Reimbursement	12,000
561420 Office Equipment	15,000
516020 Professional Svs Contracts & Fees	313,779
Total	$750,000

and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby provided to the Director of Budget and Management to establish designations in 2015 for the amounts indicated above and to reappropriate said funds into 2016, and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby provided to the Division of Budget and Management and Department of Personnel to make the necessary budgetary and personnel adjustments to effectuate this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution will be forwarded to the County Executive, the Office of the Comptroller, the Division of Budget and Management, the Department of Law, and to Commissioner Gale R. Burstein in the Erie County Department of Health.