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January 14, 2014

Dear Community Partners:

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is pleased to inform you about an important California Superior Court ruling regarding the dangers of lead paint to children. Earlier this month, Santa Clara Superior Court Judge James P. Kleinberg issued a final decision that found the promotion, manufacture, and sale of lead paint by defendants Sherwin Williams, National Lead (Dutch Boy Paints) and ConAgra (William Fuller Paint Co.) created a public nuisance. Judge Kleinberg has ordered those three defendants to abate the public nuisance caused by their promotion of lead paint in our county and nine other counties and cities within California. The three defendants have been ordered to pay \$1.15 billion into a dedicated fund to remove lead paint from homes in the ten counties and cities in California. The County of Los Angeles' share of this fund is 55%, or \$632.5 million.

This decision is a long overdue public health remedy that will help safeguard the health of our children and protect their future by removing lead from a child's environment prior to exposure. As you may know, children exposed to lead suffer from neurologic impairments that can affect a child's learning ability and their future earning potential and productivity.

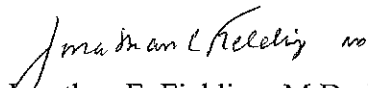
The main cause of lead poisoning in Los Angeles County is lead-based paint, which was banned in 1978 but still remains in over 1.5 million homes in Los Angeles County. The judgment will provide funding for remediation of lead-paint contaminated housing, with priority given to residential properties with current or past history of lead poisoned children, and properties in low income areas. In addition to the homes where children have been poisoned, the County plans to target over 85,000 homes that are in low income neighborhoods.

This ruling is the largest public nuisance award in the history of California and comes after 13 years of highly contentious litigation. However, much work is ahead of us. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is currently reviewing Judge Kleinberg's decision, and is developing a lead-paint abatement and remediation plan to implement the court's order. The full Statement of Decision can be accessed at: <http://legalnewsline.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/kleinbergfinaldecision.pdf>.

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We will keep you apprised of new information that becomes available. Thank you for your valued service and partnership in promoting health for the residents of Los Angeles County. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Angie Toyota, Director of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) at (323) 869-7171 or Linda Ramirez, Environmental Health Services Manager, CLPPP at (323) 869-7061.

Sincerely,



Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

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