Rethinking lead in drinking water

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Sound Policy Makes a Difference: Strategies to Reduce Exposure to Lead

- Limit Lead in Consumer Products
- Set Goals and Monitor Progress
- Manage Lead in Place
- Remove Hard-to-Manage Lead

Average Blood Lead Level in U.S. Young Children (ug/dL)
Reducing Lead in Drinking Water - Policy Interventions

• Limit lead in consumer products
  – 1986 law banned pipe, plumbing and fixtures not “lead-free,” defined as less than 8%
  – 2012 law changed “lead-free” from 8% to 0.25% effective 2014

• Set goals and monitor progress
  – Prioritizes single-family homes likely to have lead pipes or lead solder in copper
  – Resident take tap sample of 1 liter after 6-hour stagnation
  – 10 to 100 samples depending on size of utility
  – Samples taken every 1 and 3 years depending on results
  – In-system sampling for select water quality parameters
Reducing Lead in Drinking Water - Policy Interventions

• Manage lead in place
  – “Lead Action Level”
    • 90th percentile below 15 ppb at first draw
  – LAL is not health-based
  – Exceeding LAL triggers start or improvements to corrosion control

• Remove hard-to-manage lead
  – If improved corrosion control does meet LAL, then replace 7% of lead service lines annually
  – Service line connects main in street to house
  – Lead service line = lead pipes
Overhaul of EPA’s Lead and Copper Rule

Lead and Copper Rule Workgroup
2014 to Aug. 2015

National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC)
Nov. to Dec. 2015

American Water Works Association (AWWA)
Mar. 2016

Replace Lead Pipes: EPA should require long-term program to replace lead service lines without regard to sampling

EPA to issue proposed rule in 2017
April 2016

Release Household Action Level: EPA should set level in water likely to give a formula-fed infant an elevated blood lead level
EDF’s Approach to Accelerate LSL Replacement

Support voluntary effort until rule overhauled

Accelerate Lead Service Line (LSL) Replacement

Democratize water testing

Improve risk communication for paint and pipes

Strengthen policies to reduce lead exposure
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