

FISCAL SNAPSHOT

CHILDHOOD LEAD PROGRAM

Date: January 2023

Analyst: Victoria Amponsah

Background

Since 1992, the childhood lead poisoning prevention program has used funds from the state and through federal grants to reduce lead exposure in children. The program was formalized into state law six years later through [section 5474](#) of the Public Health Code. To achieve the goal of reducing lead exposure, the program uses appropriated funds for outreach efforts, enhancing abnormal lead level screening, and follow-up care. Additionally, state law requires the production of yearly [legislative reports](#) that include data on funding sources and children screened.

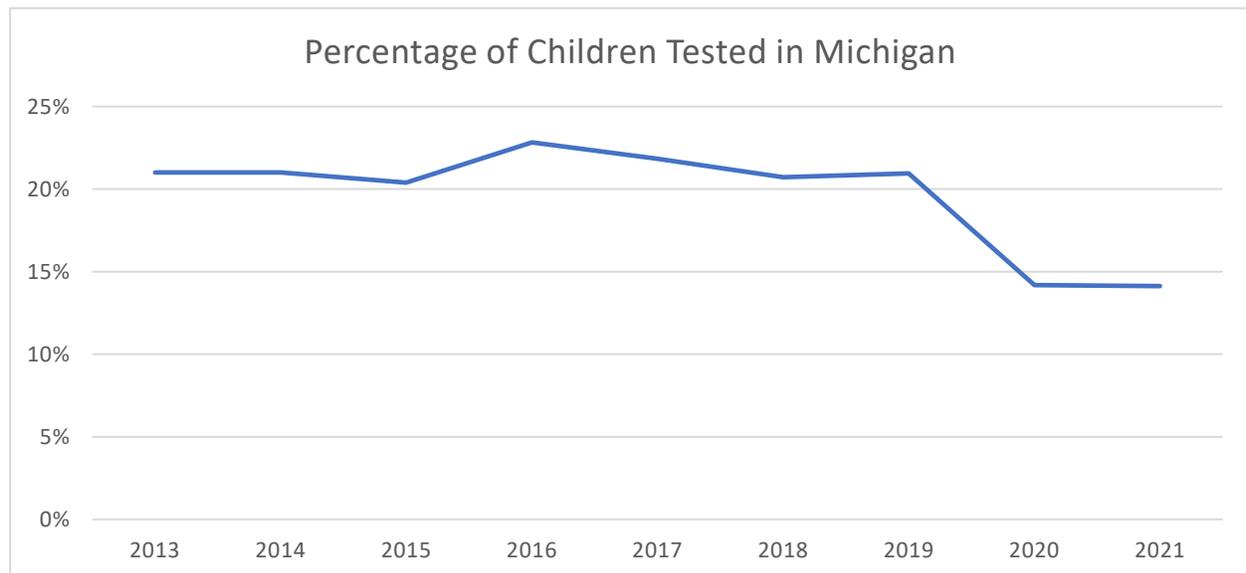
Childhood Lead Testing

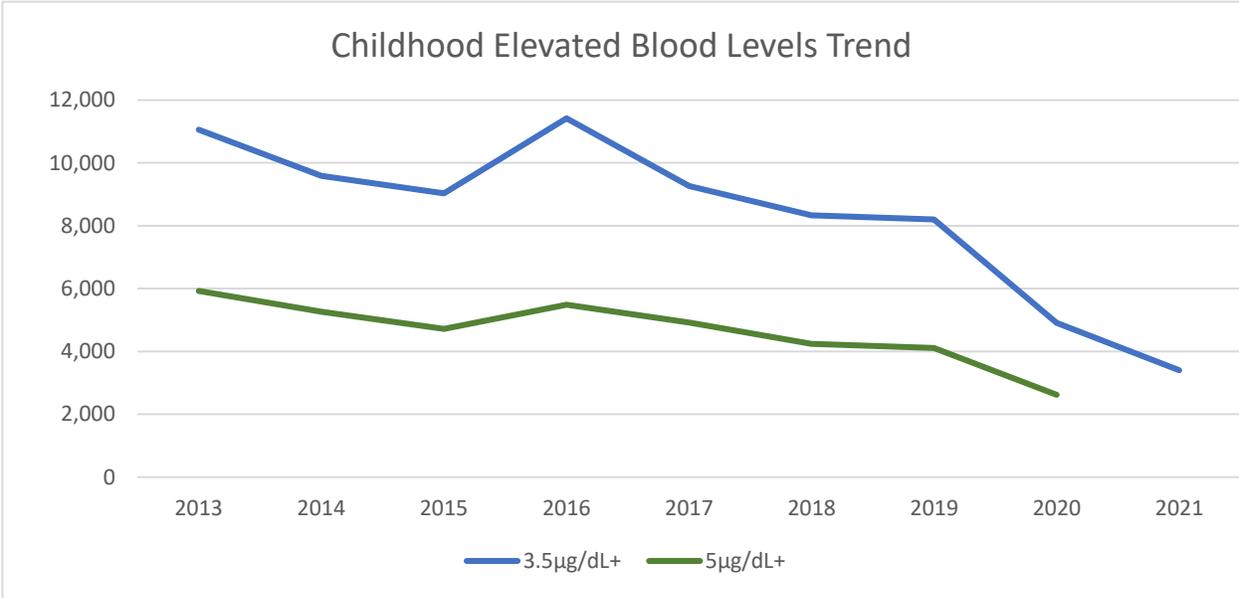
The program targets children under the age of six who are at risk of having elevated blood lead levels. Children are determined to be at risk of lead exposure if they live in a house built before 1978, are living in poverty, or have close relatives with positive elevated blood lead levels. In addition to targeting the at-risk, children enrolled in WIC or Medicaid are required to receive testing.

Testing is offered through the local health departments or a physician. Medicaid pays for the testing of children enrolled in Medicaid. Most local health departments charge a \$25 fee for testing. There are a few local health departments that offer testing free of charge for all children enrolled in WIC or uninsured individuals.

Childhood Lead Testing Trends

On average, approximately 20.8% of children within Michigan are tested each year. During the Flint drinking water crisis, there was a nearly 3% increase in the percentage of children tested. However, the COVID-19 pandemic appears to have affected the ability to test for lead exposure, leading to a significant decline. Similar to the decline in testing over the past two years, the number of children with elevated blood levels has also been decreasing.





Note: Data are no longer included for elevated blood levels of 5µg/dL after 2020. The Department of Health and Human Services changed the definition of elevated blood lead levels from 5µg/dL to 3µg/dL to reflect changes made through the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).