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June 3, 2025

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HUD Should Better Track Elevated Blood Lead Levels in HUD-Assisted Multifamily Properties

WASHINGTON DC— Today, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Inspector General (OIG) [issued a report](#) examining how HUD tracks elevated blood lead levels in children under six reported by multifamily properties receiving Section 8 project-based rental assistance. The report found that the Office of Multifamily Housing (Multifamily) lacks policies, processes, and a tracking system to effectively ensure that property owners are timely reporting suspected blood lead poisoning in children and taking timely and appropriate steps to investigate and mitigate lead hazards.

Under HUD's Lead Safe Housing Rule (LSHR), Section 8 Project-based rental assistance owners receiving HUD Multifamily assistance must comply with specific requirements following a reported child lead poisoning, including (1) ensuring that an environmental investigation is conducted to determine the source of the lead poisoning, (2) timely remediating or abating the source of the lead poisoning, if applicable, and (3) notifying HUD throughout the process. Such information must be received timely to ensure efficient and effective program administration and to monitor whether the owner has taken timely and appropriate steps to protect children who live in HUD-assisted multifamily housing.

The evaluation found that Multifamily has no internal policy specifying how staff should oversee property owners' compliance with LSHR requirements following a potential or confirmed child lead poisoning. Additionally, Multifamily's property management information system was not designed to track reports or property owners' actions to mitigate lead hazards. Multifamily reported having only received two reports of potential child lead poisonings from multifamily property owners during the five fiscal years of 2019 to 2024.

As of September 2024, more than 1.4 million households resided in HUD-assisted multifamily properties receiving Section 8 project-based rental assistance, and HUD estimates that more than 636,733 of the nearly 1.4 million housing units were built before 1978, the year the federal government banned lead-based paint in residential housing.

"Exposure to lead can have lifelong consequences for children. HUD needs to have processes and systems that sufficiently track and monitor child lead poisonings in assisted housing," said Acting Inspector General Stephen M. Begg. "HUD should work expeditiously to close these critical data and governance gaps to better protect HUD-assisted families from lead hazards."

To improve its oversight of owners' responsibilities under the LSHR, the report recommends that Multifamily clearly defines its staff's roles and responsibilities when Multifamily receives a report that a child may have lead poisoning and establish a process to track reports as well as actions required of property owners to mitigate lead hazards.

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