

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**California Assembly Passes Bill to Test Children for Toxic Lead Poisoning from  
Toys and Home Exposure  
Governor Urged to Sign Legislation to Protect  
More than Half a Million at-Risk Kids**

SACRAMENTO --- The California State Assembly approved legislation to ensure that 640,000 at-risk children get tested for lead poisoning. The bill passed with a 45-29 Assembly vote. The legislation will now go to the Senate for concurrence and then will be in the hands of the Governor.

Emily Spitzer, Executive Director of NHeLP, which sponsored the legislation, stated, "Lead poisoning causes irreversible harm to children, such as learning disabilities and developmental delays. This bill is critical to ensuring that California's at-risk children get tested and families get the information they need to prevent lead poisoning. We hope that the Governor stands up for California's children by signing this bill."

Lead poisoning is a pervasive health problem in California, with more than 640,000 children at high risk from exposure in their homes, from toys and other sources. Over 8 million homes, apartments and condominiums in the state contain lead paint, ranking California third in the nation for number of homes that still pose a health threat for small children and their families. Additional sources of lead include drinking water, soil, candy, toys, pottery, cosmetics and home health remedies and ethnic medicines.

"With more and more reports regarding lead being found in toys and other consumer products, we must be diligent about ensuring that vulnerable children are screened and tested. We must also do a better job of educating their guardians about the health risk involved," said Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas, author of the legislation.

SB 775 strengthens existing regulations by requiring all children in public programs to be tested for lead poisoning and requires physicians to inform pregnant women about lead hazards and where to obtain helpful information. Currently, only 1 in 5 children enrolled in Medi-Cal and the Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program receives a blood lead test, despite state and federal mandates.

The bill also requires the State Department of Public Health to include pertinent information about lead poisoning prevention on its Web site and publish an annual report to the Legislature and the public on its effectiveness in preventing lead poisoning of California's children, including information on state screening rates and elevated blood lead level rates.

In addition to NHeLP, Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles is another sponsor of the legislation and it is supported by dozens of health and environmental organizations.

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