



UTAH LEAD COALITION

Every Child Tested, Every Future Secured

Dear Legislators,

This is a **letter of support for Joint Resolution 2 – Encouraging Action to Reduce the Number of Utah Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels sponsored by Senator Jani Iwamoto.** This legislation encourages medical providers who care for children, pregnant women, and women of child-bearing age, to become familiar with the recommended federal and state guidelines including:

- Medicaid lead screening and testing requirements
- Reporting requirements of blood lead test results to the state of Utah
- Risk exposure prevention
- Early interventions for children with elevated blood lead levels.

In addition, this resolution encourages the Environmental Epidemiology Program of the Utah Department of Health to collaborate with medical providers to promote these efforts.

There is no safe level of lead. Lead exposure damages all organ systems, but particularly vulnerable are the developing nervous systems of the young child and fetus leading to lower IQ scores, ADHD, aggression, and other behavior disorders. The most common source of lead is from paint in homes built before 1978 (58% of Utah homes). Other sources include water, soil, ammunition, home remedies, spices, toys, hobbies, and juices. Lead poisoning is also preventable.

Blood testing is the only way to know if a child has been exposed. Unlike some states, Utah does not require blood lead testing of all children. While a federal mandate requires all children on Medicaid insurance to be tested at 1 and 2 years of age, Utah is far below the national average for Medicaid lead testing. In 2018, only 3.6% of Utah children 5 years and younger were tested and reported. More importantly, from 2016 to 2018, 2% of all Utah children tested had an elevated blood lead level, and two recent Salt Lake County studies covering 20 years of data, showed up to 2.8% of children affected.

These concerning statistics, the Sandy Water Crisis and Intermountain Healthcare's pledge to test all 1 and 2 years olds shows that Utah is not immune to the threat of lead poisoning. We need to enhance our efforts to protect our children.

Sincerely,

Claudia Fruin, MD, FAAP
Chair/Founder of the Utah Lead Coalition

The following organizations support Senate Joint Resolution 2 – Encouraging Action to Reduce the Number of Utah Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels.



Sen. Iwamoto,

The University of Utah supports the principles of your resolution to protect Utah children from lead exposure. Thank you for sponsoring this resolution.

Brian E. Shiozawa M.D. FACEP
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UPHE's Mission is dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of the residents of Utah by promoting science-based health education and interventions that result in progressive, measurable improvements to the environment and our health.

Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment is a registered 501(c)(3), tax-exempt charitable organization.

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February 6, 2020
Utah State Capitol
350 State Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

Dear Legislators,

Chair Winterton, members of the Health and Human Services Committee and state legislators thank you for taking the time to consider Senate Joint Resolution 2 and to hear public comments about this important resolution. My name is Bert Merrill and in addition to being a lifelong Salt Lake City resident, I am the Education and Outreach Coordinator for Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment. Throughout my job I organize lead poisoning focused events and presentations for students, physicians and government officials. I am here to show my support for Senate Joint Resolution 2- Encouraging Action to Reduce the Number of Utah Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels.

Lead poisoning is often discussed in the wake of an environmental emergency such as the Flint Michigan water crisis. While tragedies like Flint showcase the effect of lead poisoning on a national scale, Utah children are at risk of being poisoned everyday in their own communities.

If children and adults are regularly exposed to lead, it accumulates in their bodies causing irreversible damage. Particularly vulnerable are the developing nervous systems of young children leading to lower IQ scores, ADHD, and aggression.

Blood testing is the only way to know if a child has been exposed. Unlike some states, Utah does not require blood lead testing of all children. In 2018, only 3.6% of Utah children 5 years and younger had a blood lead test reported to the state with 2% of children tested positive for elevated blood lead level. Showcased by the small percentage of children being tested, Utahans are unaware of the impact that lead poisoning can have on them and their children.

Luckily, lead poisoning is preventable. Senate Joint Resolution 2 encourages actions to reduce the number of Utah children with elevated blood lead levels. This resolution would lay the foundation for the changes needed to protect Utah children from this often invisible poison.

Every Utah child deserves a safe place to learn, adapt and grow. I encourage this committee to approve this resolution and send it to be voted on. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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