

# NATIONAL LEAD SUMMIT

Healthy Babies Bright Futures is partnering with the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and the National Center for Healthy Housing to sponsor a National Lead Summit on December 5, 2016 in Washington, D.C.

## THE SUMMIT IS BEING DESIGNED TO:

- Make the elimination of childhood lead poisoning a national priority.
- Bring together a larger, more diverse and more powerful group of advocates and scientists to create a shared commitment to make this happen.
- Align and create a mutual support network for the reduction strategies for different lead exposures.
- Create the necessary communications and coordination tools to build the political will to make the vision a reality.

## THIS SUMMIT WILL CREATE THE PLAN TO

1. Map the sources of lead and make this information publicly and widely available.
2. Get the lead out (and create an inner-city Green Jobs program in the process).
3. Make sure there is no new lead.

The tragedy in Flint catalyzed the need for this plan. The impending arrival of a new Presidential administration gives us an unparalleled opportunity to roll out the plan and turn it into a reality.

Our starting point is the recognition that we are already more than 90% of the way towards ending lead poisoning in the United States. We got this far by getting lead out of paint and gasoline. Those two actions reduced American children's blood lead levels by almost 95%; virtually ended severe, acute lead poisoning; and raised the IQ of all children born in the US since 1980 by 3-5 points. They also appear to have played a major role in reducing rates of violent crime.

But as the recent events in Flint, Newark, Cleveland and other cities so painfully remind us, the epidemic of lead poisoning in America is far from over. CDC estimates that 535,000 children under the age of five still have elevated blood levels. 20 million American homes still contain lead paint. Approximately 10 million homes still have lead water pipes.

Lead poisoning is not fair. By a wide margin it disproportionately affects the most marginalized and the most vulnerable children among us, the children with the fewest resources and the least resilience. It dooms these already threatened children to a

lifetime of reduced achievement and increased risk. This is a human tragedy and a moral failing. It is intolerable that lead poisoning still exists in this country.

We plan to follow the summit with a meeting at the White House early in 2017. The goal is to extract a firm commitment and the necessary resources from the new administration to end childhood lead poisoning in the United States within five years. With that goal in mind, an eminent and diverse steering committee of 32 scientists, physicians, lead abatement organization leaders, foundation program officers, federal and local public officials, and environmental and children's health advocates has been assembled. Now the steering committee is dividing up the work of creating an action plan or blueprint for lead elimination, putting together the invitation list and agenda, developing the messaging and communications plan, and fundraising and sponsorships for the event.

The great tragedy of lead poisoning is that we know how to end it. We have the money to do it. But until now we have not had the will or the leadership to finish the job. Our goal is to change that and to end this social crime.