

**THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESPONDS TO THE U.S. SURGEON GENERAL'S
CALL TO ACTION TO PROMOTE HEALTHY HOMES**

Tallahassee—The Florida Department of Health (DOH) announces efforts in response to the United States' Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes. The Call to Action, issued June 9, 2009 by Acting Surgeon General Steven K. Galson, MD, MPH, emphasizes the importance of healthy homes and how housing can affect health.

"By following the steps outlined in this Call to Action, we can prevent many diseases and injuries that result from health hazards in the home," said Lisa Conti., DVM, MPH, Dipl. ACVPM, DOH Division of Environmental Health Director.

Some steps outlined in the Call to Action include:

- Keep children safe by reducing potential hazards that could lead to poisoning, drowning, suffocation or strangulation.
- Improve the air quality in homes by installing carbon monoxide alarms, testing homes for radon, eliminating smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke, and controlling allergens that contribute to asthma and mold growth.
- Check gas appliances, fireplaces, chimneys and furnaces yearly, and change furnace and air conditioning filters regularly.
- Improve water quality by learning to protect and maintain private water wells.

To address these and other potential risks that may prevent a home from being safe or healthy, DOH has taken the following steps to assist Floridians:

1. DOH has recently established a partnership network called Florida's Partnership for Lead Poisoning Prevention and Healthy Homes (the Partnership). The Partnership provides a forum for interested individuals to stay informed about healthy homes research, effective programs, community events and funding opportunities. Any person or business interested in joining the Partnership can call DOH at (850) 245-4277 for more information.

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2. To assist communities and families, DOH provides a two-day training called the "Essentials for Healthy Homes Practitioners." Currently, Duval, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach County Health Departments have received the training and have begun working with their local Healthy Start Programs to assess homes and educate the families they serve about environmental health hazards in the home.

Comment [MD2]: About training

3. DOH is also partnering with housing, building and community organizations to increase awareness about the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule. Under the rule, the EPA requires contractors to follow lead-safe work practices in target facilities to prevent the creation of lead hazards. They are also required to provide an educational brochure about preventing lead poisoning to families or other owners of child occupied facilities. This rule will go into full implementation beginning April 22, 2010.

It is the mission of DOH to promote, protect and improve the health of all people in Florida. DOH will continue to collaborate with existing programs to help Floridians identify and fix health hazards that may be present in the home. For more information about healthy homes initiatives,

please call 850-245-4277 or visit the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes website at www.surgeongeneral.gov, the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthyhomes.htm, the EPA website at www.epa.gov, or the HUD website at www.hud.gov/offices/lead.

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