

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Land and Materials Administration

1800 Washington Boulevard • Suite 610 • Baltimore Maryland 21230-1719

410-537-3304 • 800-633-6101 • www.mde.maryland.gov

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION COMMISSION November 6, 2025 • 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. • Hybrid Meeting Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Adam Skolnik	Cliff Mitchell	Nicola Tran
Alexandra Nestadt	Fred Banks	Ruth Ann Norton
Barbara Moore	Manjula Paul	Susan Kleinhammer
Benita Cooper	Michael Ichniowski	
	Naadiya Hutchinson	

Members Absent:

Anna Davis	Jacob Benzaquen	Nicole Hart
Christina Peusch	Mary Washington	

Guests Present:

Adewole Adegborioye-MDE	George Stewart-GHHI	Nekia Randall-BC-DHCD
Amanda Selig-Public	Jennifer Corder	Patrick Connor-CECS
Anastasia Solano-MDE	Jennifer Martin	Paula Montgomery-MDE
Andrew Roelke-MDE	Jeanny Pope-OAG	Rashad Taylor-MDE
Ashley Ray-MDE	Jonathan Riddix-BC-DHCD	Reva Smith-MWPH
Bay Hanson-GHHI	Katherine Rush-Public	Rick Kessler-MDE
Brian Mead-Public	Katherine Taylor-BC-DHCD	Riley Rashon-Public
Brionna Adams-GHHI	Kevin Stanley-MDE	Shadia Musa-GHHI
Carrie Johnson-Public	Kira Videan-MDE	Shamola Dye-MDE
Chris Cicero-Public	Lenora Thompson-GEO	Sheneka Frasier-MDE
Chris White-ARC	Leslie Delcid-MDE	Stephanie Cobb-Williams-MDE
David Griffin-MDE	Maria Prawirodihardjo-MDE	Steven Homola-BCDHCD
Dawn Joy-AMA	Marjorie D'Ambrosio-MDE	Thelonious Williams-MDH
Denifah Bun-Tejan-MDE	Matthew Koning-MDE	William Doyle-HCHD
Eunice Johnson-GEO	Miranda Salters-Public	Wendy Phillips-MDE
Felicia Graves-MDE	Nancy Servatius-MDH	

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda 11/06/25
- Minutes Draft 10/09/25

Opening Remarks, Acknowledgements, and Other Discussions:

In response to the survey that Ruth Ann Norton circulated to the Commissioners, she indicated that she will proactively assign and call members in the next week if they do not assign themselves to a committee.

Approval of Minutes:

Adam Skolnik, CPM, ARM, CAE made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, which was seconded by Fred Banks. All Commissioners were in favor and the minutes were adopted.

Old & New Business:

- **Agenda Changes and Committee Sign-ups** Ruth Ann Norton noted changes to the agenda, specifically the absence of the Just Communities program or Sheriff Kogan, which they plan to reschedule for the December 4th meeting. She also requested that members assign themselves to at least one committee using the Google or SharePoint sign-up link provided in the chat, stating that proactive assignments would occur if not completed.
- **Legislation and Outreach Activities** Ruth Ann Norton mentioned potential pending legislation from the Maryland Department of the Environment and current discussions between GHHI and Delegate Sandy Rosenberg regarding legislation to address fraudulent certificates, enhance penalties, and connect Maryland Home Improvement Commission (MHIC) licensure to compliance with lead risk reduction housing law. Chair Norton also provided an update on the government shutdown, noting that HUD grant funds related to healthy housing and lead are still active. She expressed gratitude for the work done during Lead Poisoning Prevention Awareness Week by MDE, the Maryland Department of Health, and various teams, and outlined plans for convenings and major events throughout the next year focused on application assistance, advocacy training, and legal rights.
- **Research on Contractor Licensure** Paula Montgomery from the Maryland Department of the Environment presented research results on laws that might require the Department of Labor to address lead certification for contractors, focusing on tying rehabilitation permitting to contractor accreditation for work on pre-1978 residential rental properties. Paula Montgomery discussed the shift from specific Department of Housing and Community Development regulations to the adoption of the International Building Code and the International Existing Building Code, noting a lack of ties in the latter to compliance with local, federal, or state codes, which would have required contractors to comply with accreditation requirements.
- **Addressing MHIC Licensure and Enforcement** Chair Norton suggested requesting an opinion from the Attorney General's office regarding MDE's power to communicate with MHIC and sanction a contractor's licensure for violating the Maryland lead risk reduction in housing law. Paula Montgomery and Adam Skolnik, agreed on the need to explore enforcement levers, particularly concerning owner-occupied properties, which account for about 33 to 35% of poisoned children. Adam Skolnik, emphasized the need for legislative action to mandate lead training for contractors working in pre-1978 houses, regardless of whether the property is a rental or non-rental.

- **Future Legislative Discussions and Concerns** Nadia Hutchinson raised an issue regarding the most recent state-wide Tenant Bill of Rights, effective July 1st, 2025 [HB0693/CH0124](https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Tenant-Landlord-Affairs/Documents/Tenant-Bill-of-Rights-V2.pdf), which mentions lead paint but omits specific references to lead certificates. Ms. Hutchinson provided the link: <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Tenant-Landlord-Affairs/Documents/Tenant-Bill-of-Rights-V2.pdf> to the document from the Maryland Housing and Community Development regarding the Tenant Bill of Rights. Chair Norton suggested this could be easily amended for clarity and agreed to schedule a panel of tenant advocate lawyers to discuss the Bill of Rights at the next meeting. Susan DiGaetano Kleinhammer requested a discussion on the interpretation of House Bill 1367 (Falsifying Information and Penalty), which went into effect October 1st, concerning inspector fraud and the interpretation of the 24-hour notice and specified time requirement for inspections in the LURKA system. Chair Norton suggested an AG opinion might be needed on HB 1367's application, though they and Frederick Banks clarified that current enforcement focuses on patterns of non-notification or misnotifications rather than precise adherence to the hours and minutes.
- **Policy Follow-ups and MHIC Issues** Paula Montgomery agreed to look into the MHIC issue further, working with Frederick Banks and potentially the AGs to formulate talking points and a request for an opinion. Chair Norton stressed the need to crosswalk regulations for contractors and inspectors and to seek clarifying language for the Tenant Bill of Rights, ensuring that the certificate requirement for rental units is included. Chair Norton also mentioned that the Department of Housing and Community Development could not present on the vacant housing plan due to a change in commissioner, and asked Nicola Tran -DHCD- to find out who is running that plan and who is in charge of the Tenant Bill of Rights for DHCD.
- **Baltimore City Lead Program Statistics** Chair Norton requested MDE to send an invitation for the new Baltimore City Health Commissioner to address the commission at the next meeting and moved to the monthly dashboard on lead program statistics. Katherine Taylor presented an overview of the Baltimore City grant, which began in April, outlining an award of \$5.85 million, with \$5.2 million for lead remediation and \$650,000 for healthy homes funding, with goals to complete 225 units for abatement or interim control, 120 units for healthy home hazards, and 325 units for lead inspection and risk assessment. Katherine Taylor reported that as of the meeting, nine units have been completed, exceeding the initial projection of zero for the startup quarters, and 108 risk assessments have been tested so far.
- **Grant Eligibility and Implementation** Barbara Moore inquired about the qualification criteria for the grant, and Katherine Taylor explained that eligibility requires income qualifications, the presence of a child (visiting or living) or a pregnant person, location within Baltimore City, and the house being built before 1978; the minimum time for a child's presence in the unit is six hours a week. Brian Mead, a real estate agent, asked how the funds work for rentals, and Katherine Taylor clarified that the funds go to the contractors, but for rentals, owners must provide a 20% match toward lead remediation work and enter into a contract with the program. Katherine Taylor confirmed that referrals for children with Elevated Blood Levels (EBL) can be made directly to their program, or through the Health Department, and that they have an expedited process for EBL situations.

- **Health Department and Grant Program Processes** Brionna Adams, from the Baltimore City Health Department, clarified that the Health Department's investigation process prioritizes finding the source of lead exposure, typically testing the location where the child spends the most time, such as a primary home or a relative's home, without strict hour minimums for investigations. Chair Norton distinguished that the Health Department's process is for investigations and case management, while Katherine Taylor's six hours a week is the minimum qualification for receiving grant assistance. Katherine Taylor explained that if a unit does not enroll in the grant program after a risk assessment, the client still receives the lead inspection copy from Arc Environmental and is educated on the results, including which areas are hazards.
- **Program Enrollment and Information Sharing** Katherine Taylor confirmed that information is still provided even if individuals are not enrolled in their program, with the ideal goal being enrollment, possibly through other grant sources if the current one is not applicable. Chair Norton questioned the practice of only providing the risk assessment to the owner, citing a 1996 Baltimore City incident where inspection notices were manipulated, leading to a requirement for notices to go to both owners and residents. Chair Norton urged the city and state to quickly review this practice to enhance disclosure and transparency.
- **Risk Assessment Protocols and Data Sharing** Susan DiGaetano Kleinhammer asked if the risk assessments for the program follow HUD Chapter 16 protocols, regardless of an elevated blood level (EBL) child, and if redacted reports could be shared with the commission for learning about lead sources. Katherine Taylor clarified that their program, being HUD-funded, focuses solely on lead-based paint and dust hazards and follows all required HUD guidelines for risk assessments. Kevin Stanley supported this by citing 24 CFR 35.125A, which requires the designated party to provide a notice of evaluation to the occupants, including the owner.
- **Unifying Approaches for Lead Investigation** Susan DiGaetano Kleinhammer raised concerns about potential conflicts between Maryland regulations, which mandate risk assessments following Chapter 16 regardless of an EBL child, and the focus on paint-only investigations, suggesting that more comprehensive source investigation is needed as EBL standards lower. Chair Norton agreed that there is an opportunity for a unified approach, and Katherine Taylor confirmed that units being worked on due to an EBL child have generally already been involved with the Baltimore City Health Department or MDH case management. Brionna Adams opted not to comment on this discussion at the time.
- **Challenges with Lead-Free Certificates and Data Sharing** Susan DiGaetano Kleinhammer initiated a discussion on lead-free certificates, emphasizing the need for the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to share more data with the commission, citing major cases like American Home Owner Services and Green Environmental involving approximately 10,000 invalidated certificates. She pointed out that there were no standardized protocols for lead paint inspections resulting in lead-free certificates between 1996 and 2008, and that current practices using a "one reading, one XRF reading per testing combination" may be insufficient.

- **Consequences of Invalidation and Inspector Concerns** Susan DiGaetano Kleinhammer noted that the lowering of the EBL threshold and older inspection protocols have led to more environmental investigations and increasing certificate invalidations, which she noted causes anger among property owners who followed regulations and hired accredited inspectors. She raised concerns about the cost of retesting, the tight 30-day timeline for retesting occupied units, and the risk to occupants who may be living in properties found to contain lead. Susan DiGaetano Kleinhammer also stressed the commission's goal to maintain low-cost affordable housing, which is challenged when property owners increase rent to cover the costs of reinspections.
- **Proposed Solutions for Lead-Free Certificate Issues** Susan DiGaetano Kleinhammer suggested that MDE should take paint samples to confirm if enclosure is a factor in positive readings, revise the regulation protocols for lead-free status, and consult with the original inspection company's paperwork before performing oversight inspections. She also proposed a triage system to assess the risk of potentially inadvertently issued certificates or those where protocols were followed but lead is still present. Susan DiGaetano Kleinhammer suggested establishing a housing subcommittee to address these issues holistically, involving MDE, property owners, and other stakeholders.
- **Discussion on Reinspection Timeline and Rental Costs** Naadiya Hutchinson agreed that the costs of reinspection are often passed to tenants, leading to significant rent increases during a housing crisis. She expressed hesitancy about lengthening the 30-day reinspection timeline, fearing it would harm renters in potentially hazardous homes. Chair Norton agreed that once a certificate is invalidated, the turnaround time should be shorter, not longer, and suggested that while legislation might not be the answer, solutions should be explored to prevent costs from being passed to tenants. Brian Mead suggested subsidizing the cost of lead-free inspections, noting that the higher cost compared to regular inspections pushes landlords to choose the cheaper option.
- **MDE Transparency and Inspector Accountability** Fred Banks clarified that information on the 1,400 invalidated certificates is posted on MDE's website, and they strive for transparency. raised concerns about the process for removing inspectors from the accreditation list, noting a lag time between identifying an inspector under investigation and their removal. Banks suggested MDE consider temporarily suspending inspectors' public credentials during a valid investigation to reduce public and MDE liability. Fred also corrected an assumption, stating there is no requirement for a lead-free property to be reinspected at change in tenancy or occupancy.
- **Critique of System Effectiveness and Data Mining** Adam Skolnik, argued that the system worked because it caught the "scofflaws," like Green Environmental, and suggested that massively changing a working system is not the right solution. Naadiya Hutchinson disagreed, arguing that the system was not effective because hundreds of homes were impacted before the fraud was caught, causing a breach of trust due to the delay in notification. Patrick Connor expressed curiosity about how MDE leverages its database to detect fraudulent activity, citing examples where Green Environmental posted multiple unique certificates for the same property on the same day or hours apart.

- **Child Screening and Lead-Free Certificates Data** Chair Norton reiterated the commission's focus on protecting children and adults from harm. Barbara Moore asked if there is a data report available with the number of lead-free certificates, categorized by year, and required dust and XRF testing. Mr. Banks confirmed MDE regularly looks at this data, noting there are tens of thousands of lead-free certificates, and MDE prioritizes looking at properties with people at risk first.
- **Inspection Standards and Health Department Follow-up** Ally Nesdat shared their personal experience in an owner-occupied home that was previously a rental, where their son had astronomical lead levels despite a recent inspection. Ally Nesdat noted that a private inspection conducted by Susan found hazards the Health Department did not. Chair Norton asked Brionna Adams to look into why the private inspection picked up more hazards than the Health Department's, emphasizing the need for standardized inspections regardless of who is conducting them.

Agency Hot Topics/Current Events

- **MDE (Maryland Department of the Environment)** Frederick Banks announced that renewal season is underway, reminding property owners that fees will increase on January 1st and that renewals must be submitted by December 31st to avoid being late. A change in the budget bill mandates that registration renewal for lead-affected homes will switch from one year to every two years, effective January 1st. MDE is conducting a social media campaign to share this information.
- **MDH (Maryland Department of Health)** Cliff Mitchell acknowledged the fine work done by staff at MDH, local health departments, and GHHI for Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, highlighting successful efforts in Dorchester County. MDH is considering a future event in Western Maryland to discuss the problem there. Cliff Mitchell also noted ongoing opportunities to improve communication among Baltimore City Health Department, Baltimore Department of Housing and Community Development, and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development regarding efficiency in providing relief to homeowners and renters. Cliff Mitchell mentioned that MDH is watching the federal budget situation closely, particularly regarding the impacts on Medicaid and the state budget, noting that quick, nimble response will be required once clarity is available.
- **MDAAP (American Academy of Pediatrics, Maryland Chapter)** Dr. Michael Ichniowski shared the [social media link](#) of the AAP chapter's video about screening children and locating heavy metal testing results on baby food packaging, with the commission.
- **MSDE/OCC (Maryland State Department of Education/Office of Child Care)** Manjula Paul reported that the Office of Child Care sent out information on lead poisoning prevention, including the importance of testing children and providing a lead-safe childcare environment. Paul also shared that they met with MDH and MDE regarding water testing in child care centers, with plans for 20% volunteer testing related to the upcoming Lead Copper Rule.
- **MD-DHCD (Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development)** Nicola Tran reported that DHCD is working to launch two new HUD programs, hampered by staffing positions tied up in the hiring process. DHCD has seen an uptick in applications for existing rehab programs, attributing this to including rehab programs in the energy program application. Tran also expressed concern about LIHEAP funding with the heating season approaching.

- **BCHD (Baltimore City Health Department):** Brionna Adams reported that the Baltimore City Health Department is actively looking for a sanitarian supervisor. Adams thanked everyone for their help during lead week, noting that Baltimore City was present at nine outreach events in October, tested 24 children, and reached 62 individuals with information.
- **BRU (Baltimore Renters United)** Naadiya Hutchinson noted that Baltimore Runners United has been uplifting various programs offered by the Baltimore City government for residents impacted by the federal government shutdown, such as rental assistance for furloughed workers and food banks.

Public Comments and Updates

- **Lead Certificate Cleanup and Reporting** Patrick Connor encouraged monthly reporting on cleaning up 1,400 certificates, specifically those related to "lead free" and "lead free limited" inspections, which impact thousands of units. Fred Banks acknowledged being on the same page as Mr. Connor, explaining that some earlier anomalies were "legacy certificates" migrated to the LRCA database, which is currently in version one. They noted that they are working on IT upgrades and trying to implement automatic notifications in the system to prevent future anomalies, while also being careful not to prevent inspectors from performing their jobs. Fred Banks discussed challenges in validating inspection timing, mentioning situations where an inspector might log multiple inspections within a short timeframe, prompting the MDE to reach out to confirm how the inspections actually occurred. Patrick Connor expressed appreciation for the explanation, particularly concerning items like risk reductions, but raised concern about the volume of limited and one-time lead free certificates processed by Green Environmental, especially given that the company reportedly did not have an X-ray fluorescent analyzer at certain times.
- **Investigation Methodology and Next Steps** Chris Cicero, representing Reliable Property Management Company, requested that more comprehensive investigations be considered before assigning liability to landlords, noting that it is often unclear when lead exposure occurred. Patrick Connor responded to Chris Cicero's concern by reiterating the expectation of receiving an investigation in accordance with HUD chapter 16, which should provide a solid pathway for determining sources of exposure, often revealing multi-source contamination.

Adjournment:

Meeting ended at 11:30 am

Future Meeting Date:

Next Meeting Reminder: Thursday, January 8, 2026, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.