

Mid Atlantic Lead Forum
October 1 – 2, 2019
Hunt Valley, Maryland – Delta Hotels Baltimore Hunt Valley
Social Media and Press Release

Mid Atlantic Lead Forum Oct 1, 2019 Day 1 –EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler Twitter Post

The screenshot shows a Twitter interface with the following details:

- Profile:** US EPA Mid-Atlantic (@EPARegion3) with 13.2K tweets, 521 following, 12.8K followers, and 41 likes.
- Retweet:** EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler (@EPAAWheeler) on Oct 1.
- Text:** "It was a privilege to speak at the Mid-Atlantic Lead Forum on the 1st day of Children's Health Month. @EPA is taking concrete actions to protect children such as stronger lead-dust standards and updating Lead & Copper Rule. We'll be sharing more info throughout the month."
- Image:** A group photo of approximately 12 people in professional attire standing in a modern hallway with brick pillars and blue lighting.
- Engagement:** The retweet has 2 retweets and 3 likes. The original tweet has 34 replies, 12 retweets, and 27 likes.

Mid Atlantic Lead Forum Oct 1, 2019 Day 1 – EPA Region 3 Twitter Post

US EPA Mid-Atlantic (@EPARegion3) · Oct 1
@EPARegion3 Regional Administrator Cosmo Servidio welcomed participants to the first Mid-Atlantic Lead Forum in Hunt Valley, Md. The two-day forum supports the Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposure. Learn more about lead at epa.gov/lead

1 2 4
Show this thread

1 1

Mid Atlantic Lead Forum Oct 1, 2019 Day 1 – Joe DeFelice Twitter Post

US EPA Mid-Atlantic (@EPARegion3) · Oct 1
Great start to the morning in #Maryland for @EPARegion3 Mid-Atlantic Lead Forum along w our colleagues at @hhsregion3. Thank you to EPA's Cosmo Servidio for hosting us. Federal agency cooperation is key to bridging the gap between health & housing #HUDR3 @HUDMidAtlantic

34 12 27
US EPA Mid-Atlantic Retweeted

1 2 4

Mid Atlantic Lead Forum Oct 2, 2019 Day 2 - EPA Region 3 Twitter Post


US EPA Mid-Atlantic (@EPAregion3) | Home | Moments | Search Twitter | Have an account? Log in

US EPA Mid-Atlantic @EPAregion3
Tweets 13.2K | Following 521 | Followers 12.8K | Likes 41 | Follow

PROTECTING

8 | 22 | 33

US EPA Mid-Atlantic @EPAregion3 · Oct 2
Day 2 of the Mid-Atlantic Lead Forum included presentations and panel discussions on Lead's Effects on Children and the Community. Learn more about lead at epa.gov/lead



US EPA Mid-Atlantic Retweeted

U.S. EPA Water @EPAwater · Oct 2
Does your school have what it takes to win? Step up to EPA's Campus RainWorks Challenge. Register today! epa.gov/campusrainworks



Administrator Wheeler Delivers Remarks at the Mid-Atlantic Lead Forum to Kick Off Children's Health Month [\(link\)](#)

10/01/2019

Contact Information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

WASHINGTON (Oct. 1, 2019) — This morning, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler addressed the Mid-Atlantic Lead Forum in Hunt Valley, Maryland. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

"We hold this important forum on the first day of Children's Health Month. The first – and most fundamental – responsibility of government is to protect the people, especially the most vulnerable among us.

All Americans – regardless of their age, race, income, or home address – deserve an opportunity to live in safe and healthy environments. And we know that children are especially vulnerable to the potential health effects of many hazards, including lead, which can severely and permanently impact their health and development. It is critical that our decisions and actions protect children's health and their future.

We'll be hosting multiple events throughout the country this month to highlight Children's Health Month. And today, we are releasing our new Children's Health Booklet that highlights all our programs and resources that are available to local communities. I want to commend the EPA staff that put this booklet together. It is an impressive catalog of Agency resources and assistance available to our state and local partners.

In fact, just yesterday, we announced the availability of \$10 million in rebates to upgrade our nation's school bus engines. EPA standards for new diesel engines can make them more than 90 percent cleaner than older ones. But many older engines still in operation pre-date these standards. Through the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, we provide funding to fleet owners to replace older bus engines.

Not only does this provide safer, more reliable transportation to and from school, but it also has major clean air benefits. To date, we've helped upgrade nearly 30,000 buses across the country. These are the types of programs that we'll be highlighting throughout the month of October.

We're focused on a variety of fronts, especially lead exposure. As you know, this issue disproportionately impacts children, especially those in low-income communities. That is why President Trump and this Administration are committed to tackling this problem head on.

Through the Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposure, we are addressing lead on multiple fronts, including important regulatory actions and targeting our resources to the most vulnerable communities.

The Action Plan has four primary goals and I'll provide a brief update on each.

1. Reduce Children's Exposure to Lead Sources

The plan details specific actions to target lead-based paint, lead in drinking water, and lead-contaminated soil, among other sources. By focusing on the source of the problem, we can address the contamination before it impacts children.

For example, we know that lead dust is one of the most common causes of lead exposure in children. This past June, EPA issued a stronger, more protective standard for lead dust in homes and child-occupied facilities across the country. This is the first time in nearly two decades that EPA has strengthened the standards.

I can also tell you that we are very close to issuing our proposed update to the Lead and Copper rule. It's been more than two decades since the rule was substantially updated. The 90s gave us some good things – text messaging, The Simpsons, iconic fashion styles, my Cincinnati Reds won the World Series – but when it comes to reducing childhood lead exposure we can't get stuck in the 90s.

We are committed to updating the Lead and Copper rule – and we are committed to getting it done right. When I was briefed by staff on our progress, I told them that we must ensure that the last mile of lead service lines that are replaced are not in communities that are most at risk. These communities can't afford to wait.

That's why our proposed rule would take a more proactive and holistic approach—looking at making improvements at every step of the way: from identifying the most impacted areas through better sampling and inventory requirements, to laying out specific requirements for replacing lead service lines, to protecting children where they learn and play.

When we roll out the new proposal, we will also be providing information to help connect communities with available federal programs that help finance or fund service line replacements and other actions.

We know that we can't be on the ground in every community, but with our strong federal, state, tribal, and local partnerships we know that our joint efforts will ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met and public health is protected. This is a philosophy we are working to instill across the Agency. We want to ensure we are reaching and helping those most in need.

2. Identify Lead-Exposed Children and Improve their Health Outcome

The Action Plan lays out ways to expand lead testing and then ensure that children who are identified as lead-exposed get the help and care they need. Early identification is critical. It

allows healthcare providers to intervene sooner and improve the life outcomes of affected children.

Our Regional offices have been doing great work on this front. Our Mid-Atlantic Region Lead Program stepped up its already vibrant lead program with a special yearlong initiative in Philadelphia to increase public awareness and compliance with EPA's Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule.

Their efforts involved a wide range of partners in public outreach, training, workshops, and informational meetings to encourage companies who are affected by the rule to comply. This initiative, combined with other ongoing efforts to increase compliance with lead regulations, has had significant results.

In 2018, there was a nearly 10 percent increase in certified firms across Philadelphia and a 33 percent increase in certified individual renovators.

Another great example of the Agency's efforts on this front would be in the city of St. Joseph, Missouri. In older neighborhoods throughout the city, there are still homes covered in lead paint. From 2010 to 2015, 15 percent of children tested in St. Joseph had elevated blood-lead levels – that's more than three times the national average (4%).

In response, EPA's Region 7 Office made St. Joseph the focal point of a lead task force. They are working closely with the city and local community to increase awareness of the dangers of lead-based paint and help families and schools address it.

As a result, the number of children that have been able to be tested has increased dramatically in recent years. And many more families are becoming aware of the dangers and taking steps to safeguard their children. The Mayor has even publicly recognized and thanked EPA for its efforts. This is the type of leadership and action we are trying to encourage throughout the country.

3. Communicate More Effectively with Stakeholders

The Action Plan identifies ways to streamline and improve federal messaging on the dangers of lead exposure, particularly to minority communities and those with limited English proficiency.

Today's forum is a great example of how we are working to meet this goal. We are very proud of Region 3 for taking the lead and bringing everyone here together. More effective communication reaches to the heart of our efforts to improve risk communication across the agency.

We owe it to the American public to be able to communicate to them in clear and simple terms what risks they may face in their daily lives.

The Agency's need to improve risk communication goes back to 9/11. 9/11 isn't the only example. There's the Kanawha River in West Virginia and the Gold King Mine in Colorado.

Most recently, there was Flint, Michigan, which has become the posterchild for our need to improve risk communication.

The reality is that risk communication disproportionately impacts people at the lower end of the socioeconomic ladder. They are the ones who often live, work, or go to school near industrial facilities or areas with environmental hazards. They are most impacted by how well – or poorly – we communicate health risks.

A critical part of these efforts is increasing coordination among all our partners and stakeholders.

Later this week, we will announce a new Memorandum of Understanding among 14 critical partners across the federal government, tribes, water utilities, and the public health community. The purpose of the MOU is to better coordinate our efforts to reduce lead exposure in schools and childcare facilities. We'll have more on this announcement later this week.

4. Support and Conduct Critical Research to Inform Efforts to Reduce Lead Exposures and Related Health Risks

EPA scientists work closely with our state and local partners to identify high-risk areas and provide technical assistance, as requested. With respect to research, our goal is to generate better data and better maps so we can pinpoint high-exposure communities and target resources to them quickly and effectively.

Last year, we awarded a combined \$4 million to Virginia Tech and the Water Research Foundation specifically tailored to research strategies for detecting and eliminating lead exposure in drinking water.

Through our Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program, we also support a variety of innovative technologies. One of this year's recipients is developing an inexpensive mobile platform for lead detection in drinking water.

And in April, we made a major new funding announcement. Through our new *Voluntary Lead Testing in Schools and Child Care* grant program, we were able to announce the availability of nearly \$44 million in grants to fund testing for lead in drinking water at schools and child care programs.

We anticipate awarding the grants beginning in the next few weeks, and I should note that the testing results carried out using these funds must be made publicly available.

As we move forward, it's important to remember that the U.S. has made tremendous progress reducing lead exposure over the past several decades. By strengthening laws and regulations, the median concentration of lead in the blood of children ages 1 to 5 has dropped roughly 95 percent from 1976 to 2014.

This is proof that we can address this problem.

In fact, we will be publishing a new booklet later this month focused exclusively on childhood health indicators. Across the board, these indicators are going in the right direction. Here are a few noteworthy data points from the booklet:

- The estimated percentage of children served by community drinking water systems that did not meet all applicable health-based standards declined from 18 percent in 1993 to 6 percent in 2017.
- On air quality, the percentage of children's days that were designated as having "unhealthy" air quality decreased from 11 percent in 1999 to 4 percent in 2017.

So while we know that more work remains to be done, we should draw encouragement from this progress. The Federal Lead Action Plan is an important road map that will guide federal agencies and our state and local partners as we work together to protect children and improve their futures.

The fourth week of October is National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week and you'll be hearing a lot more from us, so please keep an eye out for additional announcements and opportunities to spread awareness about lead poisoning prevention in our communities. It's very encouraging to know that so many of you are on the frontlines working to make a difference in your communities. I look forward to hearing what comes out of this important forum."



[Contact Us](#) to ask a question, provide feedback, or report a problem.