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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CITY OF CHICAGO APPLAUD WORK OF STATE AND FEDERAL  
LEGISLATORS TO ADDRESS LEAD; ANNOUNCE ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TO INCREASE  
MONITORING, REASSURE PUBLIC OF THE SAFETY OF CHICAGO WATER**

*CPS and CDPH launch programs to monitor water in schools and the homes of children who test positive for lead; residents can request free water testing by calling 311; results to be posted online*

In light of national events that have brought increased attention to the issue of water quality, Mayor Rahm Emanuel applauds the work of state and federal legislators to address this important topic. Further, the Mayor, along with several City departments, announced additional precautionary measures that will be added to the City's water testing protocol, continuing the City's track record of exceeding current state and federal regulations as well as industry standards.

"As a child, my Dad led the effort on testing for lead poisoning due to exposure to lead paint; protecting children and families from the dangers of lead exposure is important to me personally," said Mayor Emanuel. "While Chicago's water already meets or exceeds state and national standards, I commend our state and federal partners for leading the charge for updated regulations that better reflect current scientific research and that protect the health and safety of families in the state and across the country."

Chicago has achieved significant success in reducing the incidence of lead poisoning in children in recent years. Today, less than one in 100 children develop elevated blood lead levels as compared to a staggering one in four children in the late 1990s. While the cause of elevated lead levels in children is usually linked to exposure to and ingestion of lead paint, the city is taking additional precautionary steps to increase water monitoring.

While Chicago water meets or exceeds state, federal and industry standards, the City will work with legislators, stakeholders, regulators and industry experts to support measures that strengthen infrastructure and update testing and action protocols to ensure appropriate steps are being taken to continue to protect and promote the safety of our water supply. The legislative efforts in progress focus on providing resources for water infrastructure; expanding water sampling protocols; and public outreach and education. Chicago has an excellent water source - Lake Michigan - and the Department of Water Management (DWM) treats and purifies the water before distributing to residents throughout the City and to 125 suburbs across Illinois. DWM continually monitors water quality and performs testing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To protect customers from lead and other contaminants, DWM has an anti-corrosion program in which a blended phosphate is added to the water, forming a coating on the pipes from the treatment center

to the faucet, that minimizes the risk that lead and other contaminants will leach into the water. Further, Mayor Emanuel has led a major initiative to replace 880 miles of water mains, some of which are a century old. Additionally, the City is enacting new precautionary measures to reassure the public of the quality of Chicago water.

### **FREE RESIDENTIAL WATER TESTING**

Any resident may call 311 to request a free water quality test; residents requesting this service will receive a call back within two business days to schedule an appointment for a water sample to be taken. After the samples are taken, results will be provided to the requesting resident within three weeks. If test results show lead levels above 15 parts per billion, the threshold for action, DWM will schedule a return visit to the home, this time accompanied by a plumber and electrician to evaluate the site, determine the potential source of lead and recommend an appropriate mitigation plan. DWM water mains and pipes are not made of lead, but older single family or two-flat homes constructed before 1986 have lead service lines on the property of the owner; if a home tests above the threshold for lead, the City will help the homeowner identify the problem and recommend a plan of action to address it. Further, to increase transparency, DWM has also committed to posting the results of this on-demand testing online.

### **PILOT PROGRAM TESTING WATER IN SCHOOLS**

Next, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) began testing water at schools throughout the City this week out of an abundance of caution. While CPS has no indication that there is any lead present in school water, CPS has launched a pilot program to develop a standard approach for testing across the district. In addition, proposals before Congress could create new federal programs for testing water in schools and provide additional funding and protocols.

Until those federal programs are in place, CPS' pilot program is testing the water at 28 schools chosen based on criteria that includes the age of the school, age of the students (with priority given to schools with pre-K programs), presence of a kitchen (where meals are prepared) and presence of pipes that could need repairs or replacement.

Once results from the pilot program are analyzed, CPS will develop a comprehensive lead testing approach to ensure that the water in Chicago schools is safe. These testing results will also be available online. If a school tests above the threshold for lead, parents will be notified and CPS will take corrective action, including immediately supplying bottled water while needed repairs are made.

### **PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CDPH AND DWM**

As was previously announced, to directly target lead poisoning in children, DWM and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) will resume a water testing program as a proactive measure that will add to DWM's routine water testing. CDPH already completes home inspections at the residences of children with reported elevated blood lead levels. Working with DWM, CDPH will also test the water in each of these homes to rule out water as the source of lead in these children. This program is modeled after a successful partnership between the two departments in 2011 and 2012, in which water was ruled out as a source of lead in these children. Due to heightened awareness

and to validate that lead based paint is the most likely source of elevated lead levels in children, this proactive measure will be restarted to protect the health and safety of Chicago's children.

#### **PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CDPH AND CHA**

CDPH also works closely with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) to ensure residents are protected from lead. If a child living in a home under CHA's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is reported as having an elevated blood lead level, CDPH conducts an inspection and requires the property owner to fix any hazards. This is the same process for any residence found to have lead, and now includes the water testing partnership mentioned above. CHA will require property owners to fix any lead-based paint hazard within 30 days or face possible suspension of payments.

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