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New rules aimed at reducing risk of lead paint poisonings

LYNN - The city continues to be ranked by the state Department of Public Health among Massachusetts cities with the highest risk of childhood lead poisoning and that is why it is offering training to properly treat homes that have lead paint.

The city and the Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development (LHAND) have received \$2 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to establish a comprehensive lead-hazard-control program. The proposed program will provide lead paint and soil abatement in 125 units, blood lead screening, economic and training opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and businesses, as well as primary prevention services in the form of outreach and education to Lynn's most vulnerable populations.



From left, Andy Young, John Walsh, Roger Ennis and Al Colucci participated in LHAND's lead paint training.

In addition, new federal rules aimed at limiting the risk of lead poisoning took effect on April 22. These rules, which impact contractors, painters and other building trades, apply to properties built before 1978 and require every contractor dealing with lead paint to be certified. The new guidelines require contractors who disturb more than six square feet of lead-paint-covered surfaces to be lead-paint-certified renovators or be subject to severe fines. In addition, the guidelines require all contractors or landlords doing work in older structures to be trained and certified in how to safely work in structures that contain lead paint or residue.

LHAND, on behalf of the city of Lynn, will be training contractors and the general public on this new mandate. Utilizing funding received through the grant, LHAND is offering scholarships to contractors, students from Lynn Vocational Technical Institute and local building inspectors to become certified lead hazard abatement contractors and/or soil remediation specialists. The first seminar, held on April 23, provided in-depth instruction to the participants on how to properly remove lead when doing renovation or restoration work so that dust is contained and cleaned up afterward, and does not expose residents to lead risks.

Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy, who visited the training, expressed the need to train local contractors as well as provide additional lead-free housing for Lynn families. "This is a great opportunity for the city," Kennedy said. "Although the city has made great strides over the years in reducing lead paint in housing units, every additional unit we can make lead-free provides more housing opportunities for families with young children. By certifying Lynn students, we are increasing their chances to secure employment in the local trades upon graduation."

LHAND Executive Director Charles Gaeta agreed.

"It is imperative that our local tradesmen receive their certification," he said. "We are pleased to provide this opportunity to Lynn contractors, building officials and students. Approximately 80 percent of Lynn's housing stock was built prior to 1979, which indicates the city's need to have a sufficient number of contractors available to update these properties."

For information on Lynn's lead paint program, contact Patricia Costa at LHAND at 781-581-8624 or visit www.lhand.org

The effects of exposure to lead paint can cause brain damage and possibly death, depending on the level of contamination.