



# Local approaches to reducing lead in rental housing

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# Overview of presentation

- PROCESS: CPLP, 2002-2016
- OUTCOME: Rochester's Lead Law
- LESSONS LEARNED





# Lead in Rochester: 2002

- 2% of U.S. children had elevated blood lead levels
- In New York State, 5% of children
- In Monroe County, 7.4%
- In City of Rochester high risk areas, nearly 25%
- Some neighborhoods exceeded 30%





# Needs Assessment: Lead in Rochester, 2002



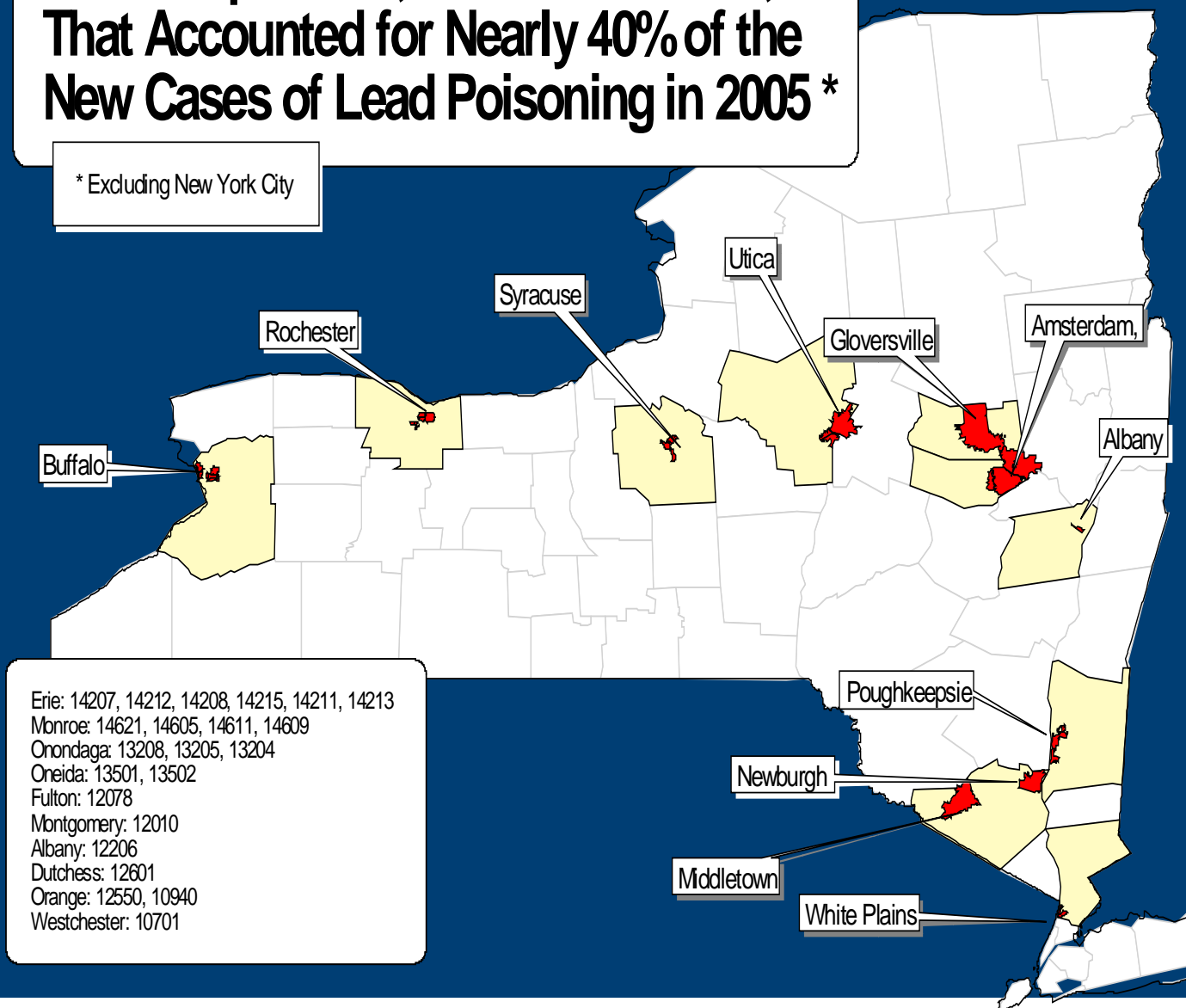
- Overview of national approaches/research
- Identified high risk neighborhoods
- Focus groups with landlords
- Focus on 1-2 unit private rentals
- Paint, dust, soil in pre-1978 rentals





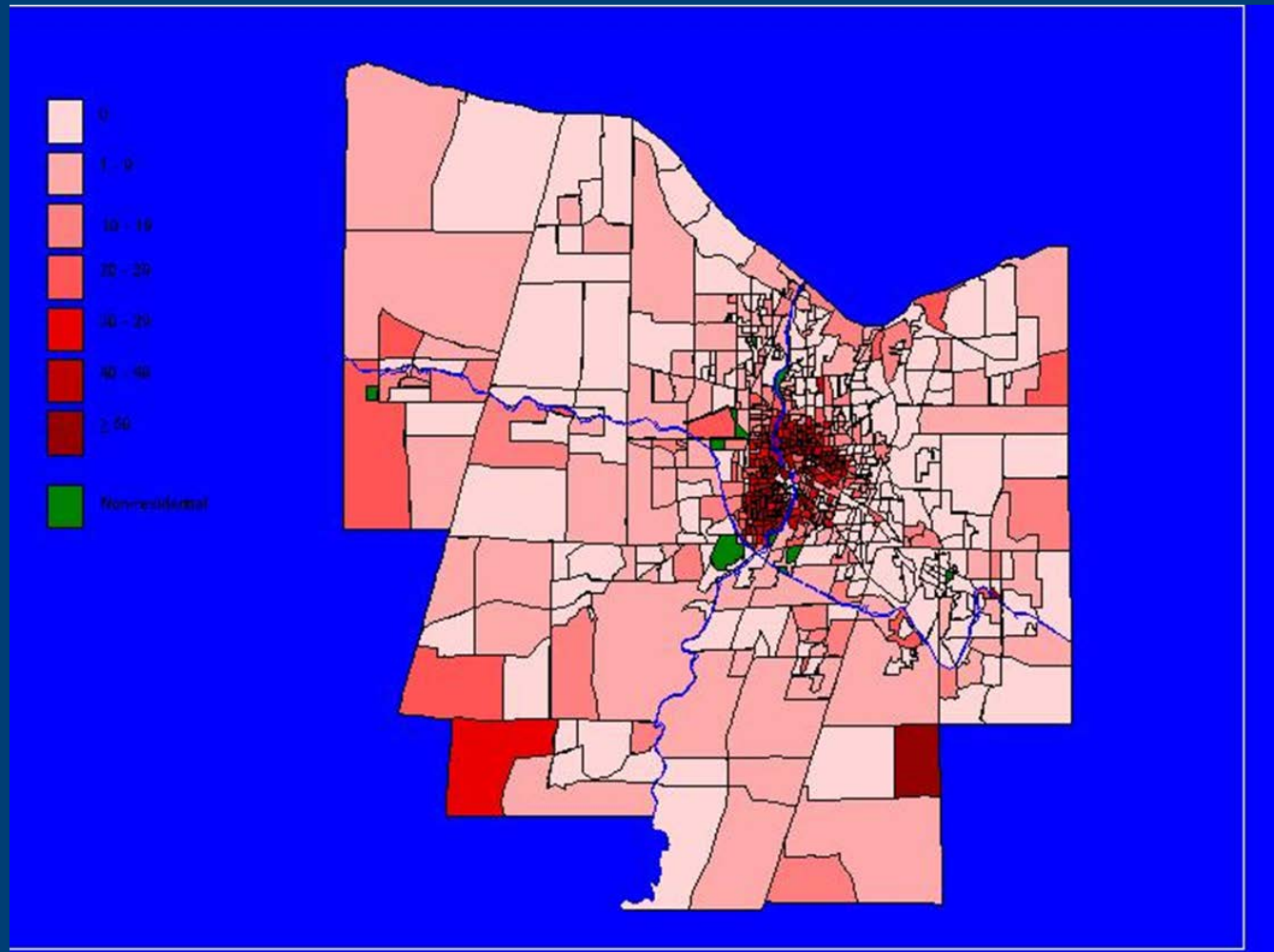
# The 22 Zip Codes, Out of Over 1600, That Accounted for Nearly 40% of the New Cases of Lead Poisoning in 2005 \*

\* Excluding New York City

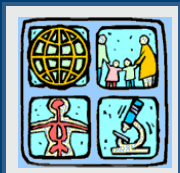




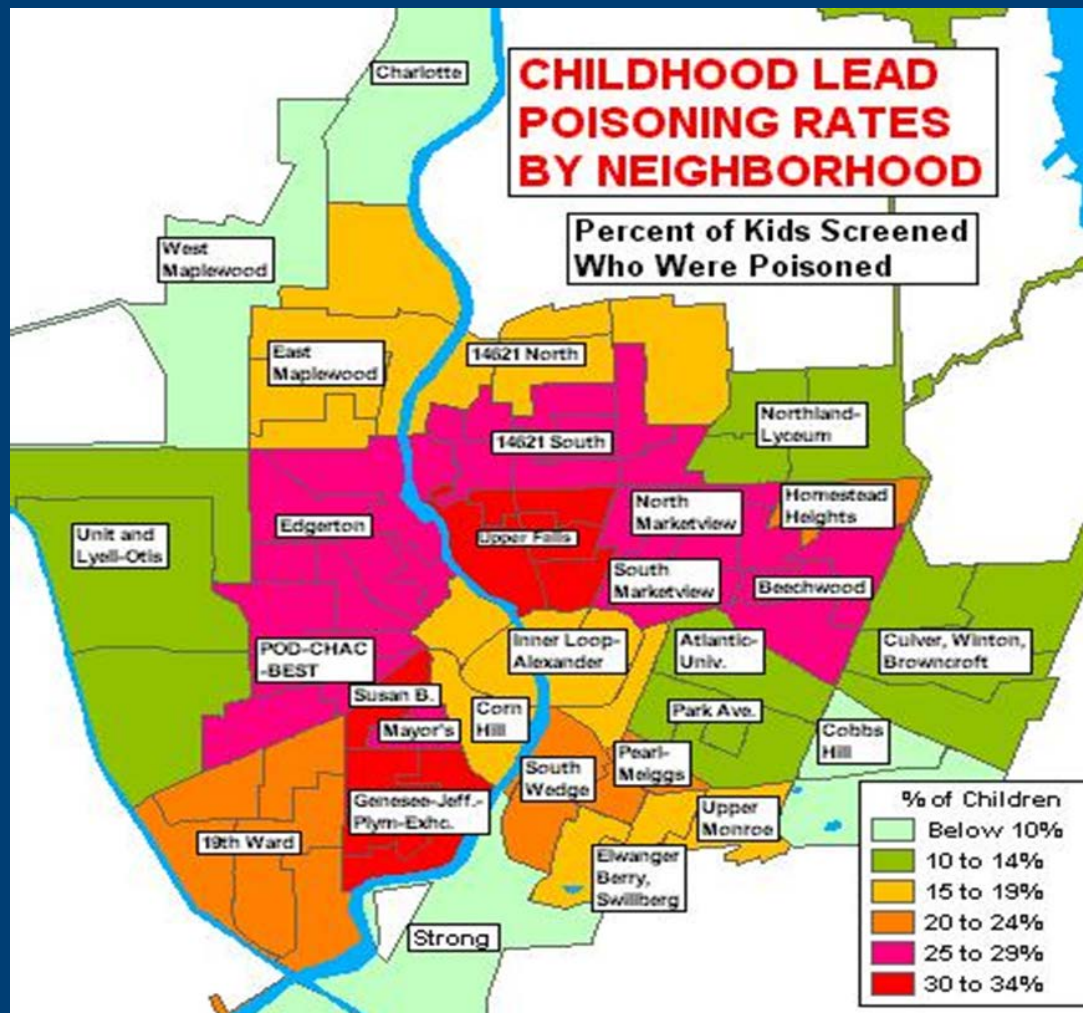
# Lead in Monroe County







# Lead in Rochester





# Lead and Environmental Justice

- Over **31%** of all of the Latinos who live in the 36 High Risk Zip Codes *in the state* live in the City of Rochester
- Nearly **78%** of the Latino children and **80%** of the Black children under age 5 who live in Rochester live in a high risk zip code.

(Empire Justice analysis of ACS data, 2005)







# *Why* is lead a problem in Rochester?

- High-risk housing stock
- 87% of housing built prior to 1970
- High poverty rate – 38% of children in poverty
- Many low-value rental properties (60% rental, mean value \$53,000)
- Many low-income owner occupants
- In high-risk areas, 85% rent homes
- Housing stock in poor condition





## Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning (CPLP)

Child advocates  
City housing department  
Community members  
County health department  
Educators  
Healthcare providers  
Housing organizations  
Human services groups  
Neighborhood organizations  
Property owners  
Public interest lawyers  
Researchers  
Risk assessors  
United Way



*“The Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning consists of individual and organizations dedicated to ending childhood lead poisoning in Monroe County by 2010. We are public agencies and private landlords, university researchers and parents, and much more. Our goal is ambitious but attainable. This is a fight we can win.”*

*putting a child's face on lead poisoning prevention*





# Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning: Three Strategies



1. Community engagement
2. Science-based solutions
3. Systems change – policies and practices

*“Lead is a health problem... with a housing solution”*





# 1. Community engagement

- Partnering with existing organizations
- Outreach to community leaders
- Communications campaign

*“lead is the silent monster that is stealing our children’s futures”*





# Communications Campaign

- Make community aware of ongoing problem
  - Prevalence
  - Social costs
  - Fixable problem
- Science-based messaging about solutions
- Make it “economically, politically, and morally unacceptable” to tolerate lead in our community





# Making lead “economically, politically, and morally unacceptable...”

- 2002: Lead seen as an unsolvable problem.
- First challenge of CPLP = redefine the issue of lead as a health problem with a *feasible* housing solution.
- Three main components of this message:
  1. Because lead impacts learning, behavior, and health, it is costly to our entire community.
  2. Lead poisoning is a problem created by our society, so we are *all* responsible for solving it.
  3. We CAN and MUST end childhood lead poisoning





Let's  
**MAKE  
LEAD  
HISTORY**

# 2004 Community Lead Summit

- **500 attendees**
  - Live call-in show on public television
  - National experts contributed to topical sessions
  - “Commitment session” at end of day
  - Commitments from leaders in all sectors to take key steps to make Monroe Co. lead safe
  - Mayor committed to pass lead law before leaving office





## 2. Science-based solutions



- Science Committee produced FAQ, science summaries from research, reviewed solutions
- Analyses of local housing and health data
- Tapped national experience and research
- “Get the Lead Out” home testing project





Information about hazards  
=  
power to avoid hazards?



Child next to old window



Old window







# Success is possible...but rare



Crib next to new window



Tenant next to new window

Only a third of households saw any physical change





# Impact of GLO: Failure = Success?

- Helped families protect their children...but limited effectiveness in terms of physical change
- Showed gaps in current policy
  - Preventable poisonings
  - Failed systems (10-15 ug/dL, letter to MCDOPH)
- Produced Rochester-specific data
  - GLO findings on extent of hazards in homes (99%)
  - Repair cost estimates lower than expected (\$3366)
  - Testing is easy and affordable (visual + wipes)
  - Stories re: failures of current systems shared with Council
  - “We can do this”





“If the people lead well...  
the leaders will follow...”







### 3. Systems change – policies and practices

- **Rochester lead law (2005)**
- County pledged to mirror city law in social services inspections, some health \$ => city
- Commit to educate landlords *and* tenants
- Seek ongoing lead hazard reduction grants
- Resolutions to evaluate impacts
  - Track emergency housing requests
  - Share blood lead data = > map high risk area
  - Annual reporting of inspection results





# Five principles for Rochester's lead law

1. **Targeted roll out:** protect the kids who are at the greatest risk first
2. **Require inspection and lead hazard control:** inspect buildings, not bodies, to find hazards before kids are poisoned
3. **Lead safe work practices:** do the work safely - do not make the problem worse!
4. **Disclosure:** warn people about lead poisoning risks when they buy or rent and when work is being done
5. **Tenant protection:** do not let the tenants be punished for asking for safe housing!





## Three policies introduced by City Council to inspect pre-1978 housing

- Private risk assessment of all rental housing
- Private inspection of ALL child-occupied homes (including owner occupied)
- Visual inspection as part of city's proactive rental housing inspections





# Rochester's Lead Law (2005)

- Added lead to existing proactive rental inspections (Certificate of Occupancy, "C of O")
- Visual inspections of all units
- Dust wipes in high-risk units that PASS visual inspection
- If unit fails either visual or dust wipes, owner must pay for and pass private clearance (~\$175)
- City monitors private clearance firms
- Re-inspection every 3 or 6 years (C of O renewal)





## How does it work?

- Pre-1978 rental housing
- Targets “high risk area” as defined by EBL rates
- Multiple triggers for inspections
- Exempts lead free properties
- Landlords can do work
- OK to use “interim controls”
- Requires lead safe work practices/ RRP certification
- Free inspections for owner-occupants







# 10 years of Rochester's lead law

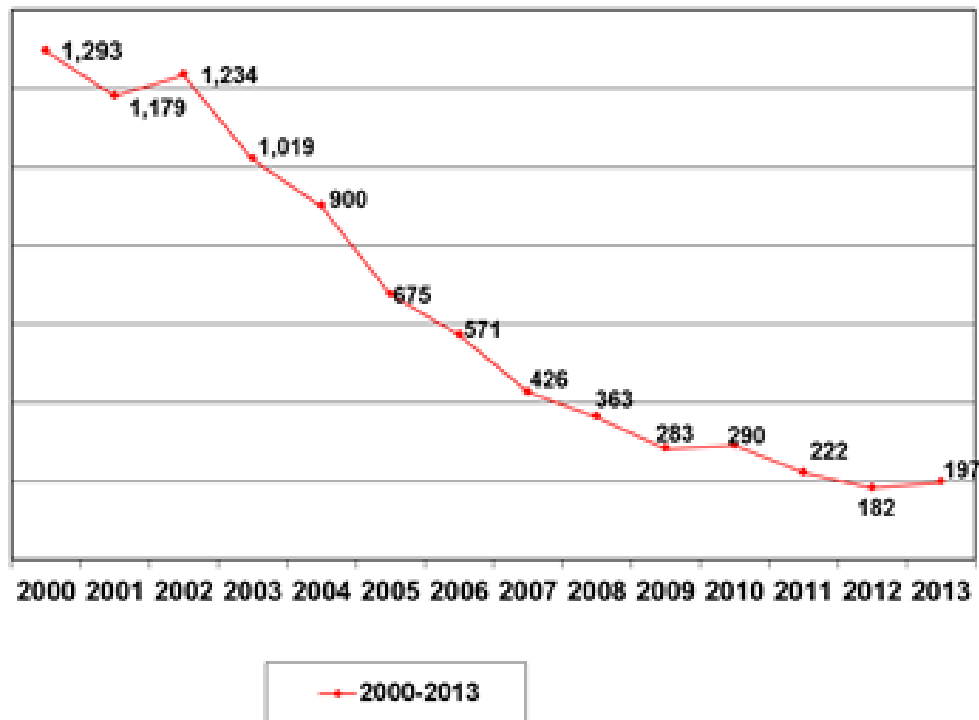
- Over 140,000 inspections, 95% pass visual
- 34,744 dust wipes, 90% pass dust wipe
- Evaluations show:
  - No significant increase in emergency housing
  - Lower compliance costs
  - Increased support
  - “Part of doing business”







## Number of Children Reported Poisoned In Monroe County

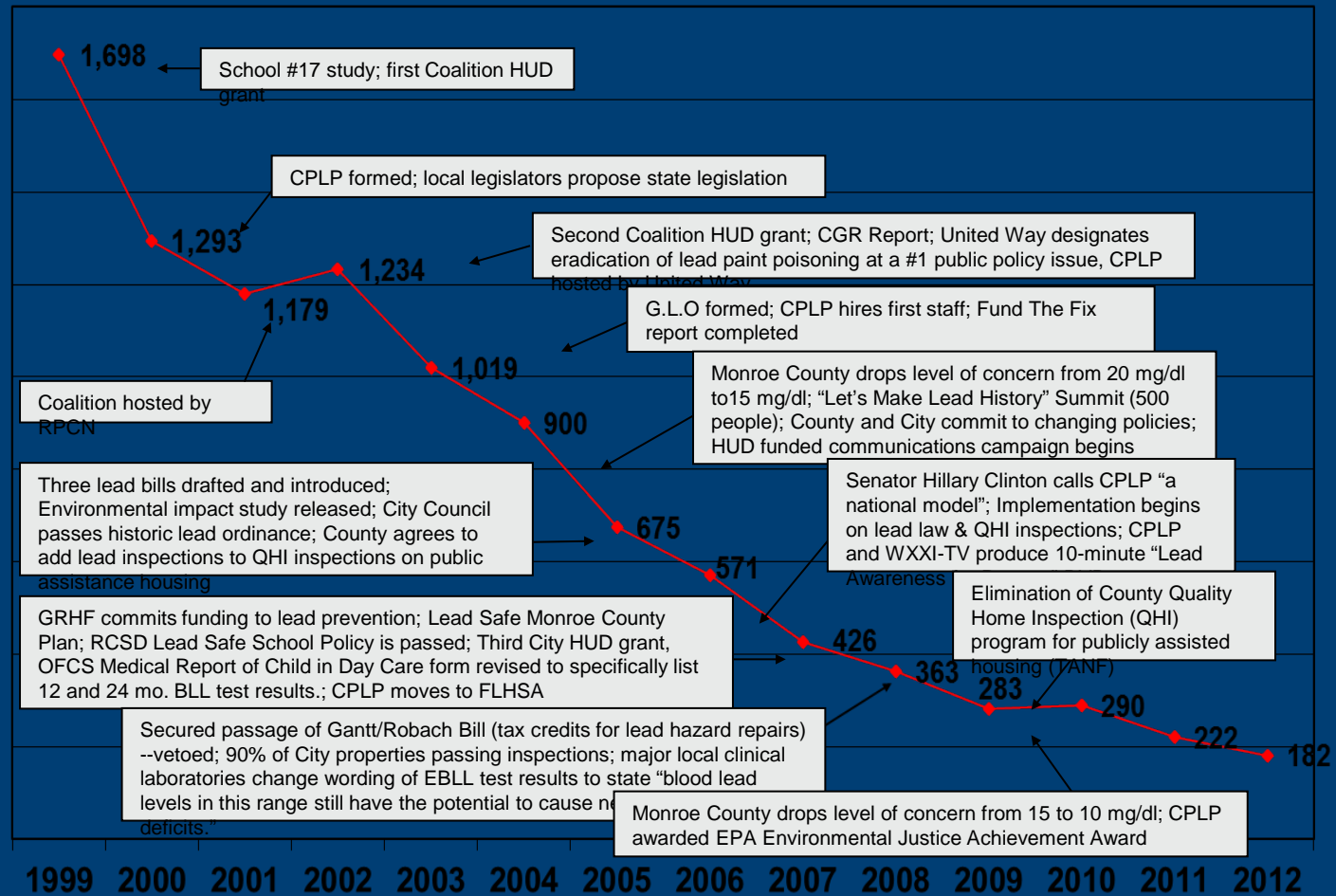


Lead poisoning declined 2.4 times faster in Rochester than in the rest of New York





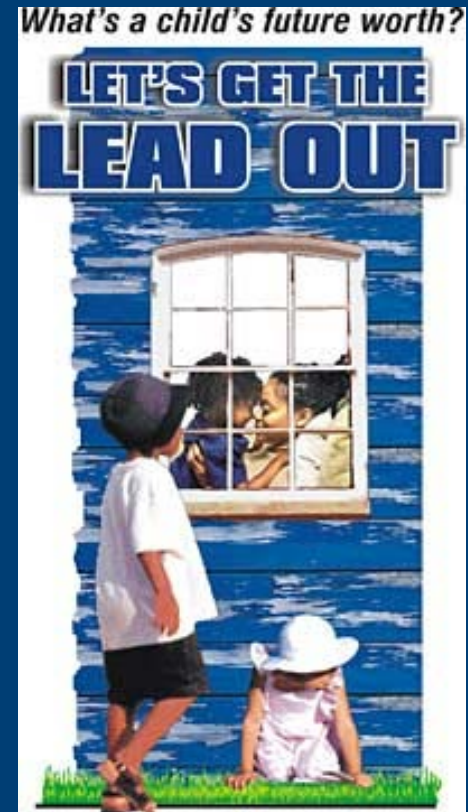
# Number of Children Poisoned / Lead Poisoning Prevention Efforts Timeline





# Lessons Learned

- What (and where) is *your* lead problem?
- What are *your* resources?
- What is your *goal*?
- What *tools* are available?
- *How will you know* if it's working?
- How can you begin? With whom?





## For more information...

- City of Rochester
  - [cityofrochester.gov/lead](http://cityofrochester.gov/lead)
  - (585) 428-6520
- Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning
  - (585) 224-3125
  - [www.letsmakeleadhistory.org](http://www.letsmakeleadhistory.org)



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