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From: US EPA [noreply-subscriptions@epa.gov]
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Subject: EPA/WV DHHR News Release: DHHR, EPA to Assist Clarksburg, WV to Test Homes with Lead Service Lines

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DHHR, EPA Partnering to Assist Clarksburg Water System to Test Older Homes with Lead Service Lines

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (July 9, 2021) – The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are partnering to assist the Clarksburg Water System in their efforts to identify and test older homes with lead service lines that may cause elevated lead levels in drinking water.

"The situation in Clarksburg is concerning, and as a precaution we encourage all families living in homes built before 1950 to use bottled water for consumption and have children younger than six years of age evaluated for lead," said Dr. Ayne Amjad, State Health Officer and Commissioner of DHHR's Bureau for Public Health. "Working together with our federal partner, the Environmental Protection Agency, we will assure safe drinking water for the residents of Clarksburg. Additionally, the state is committing funding toward lab analysis of water samples for lead content."

The issue of lead service lines was first identified by staff in the Bureau for Public Health's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program during environmental lead assessments conducted in the homes of children diagnosed with elevated blood lead levels. Confirmatory water sampling in several homes serviced by the Clarksburg Water System were above the EPA's action level (15 parts per billion). The Clarksburg Water System will implement a corrective action plan that will include additional sampling, increased frequency of monitoring, installation of a corrosion control system and an alternate source of drinking water and/or point of use filters for homeowners where elevated lead levels are known from existing sample results and where known or suspected lead service lines exist.

"EPA is committed to address lead in the nation's drinking water to ensure communities like Clarksburg are protected," said Acting EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Diana Esher.

"Addressing lead in drinking water requires partnerships, and EPA is dedicated to working with West Virginia to improve public health."

Parents of children younger than six years of age who are living in older homes serviced by the Clarksburg Water System should discuss the risks of lead exposure with their child's pediatrician to determine if precautionary blood lead testing is needed. Additional steps all consumers can take include flushing water lines used for drinking and cooking and using bottled water for making baby formula. Boiling water does not remove lead from water.

Helpful EPA resources:

Basic Information About Lead in Drinking Water: https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water

Important Steps You Can Take to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water: https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water#reducehome

Lead Poisoning and Your Children: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-02/documents/epa_lead_brochure-posterlayout_508.pdf

Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home (translations available): https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/lead-in-your-home-portrait-color-2020-508.pdf

Protecting Children's Health: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-10/documents/ch_pamphlet_oct2020-v4.pdf

Questions regarding the Clarksburg Water System and the risk for lead exposure in the water should be directed to the Bob Davis, Clarksburg Water System Chief Water Operator, at 304-624-5467, extension 121.

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