



# 2023

## LEAD POISONING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

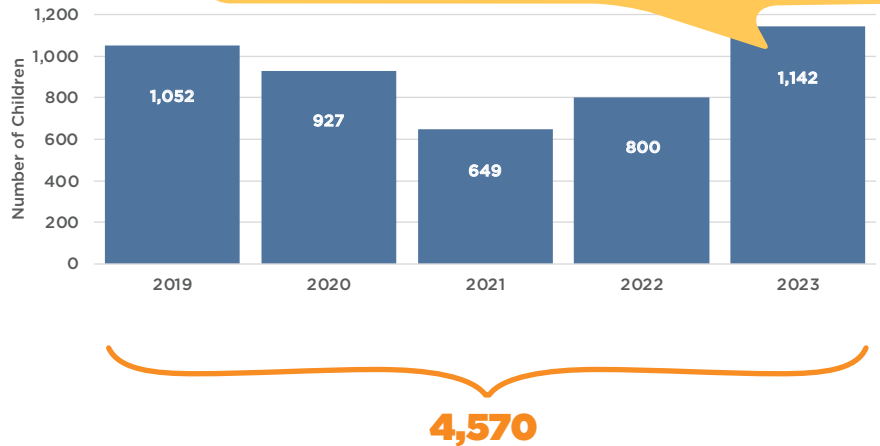
### Preventing childhood lead poisoning begins with lead-safe housing.

The number of NH children identified with elevated blood lead levels has increased since 2021.

**Figure 1:** The number of children 72 months and younger identified with blood lead levels of 3.5 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ) or higher between 2019 and 2023

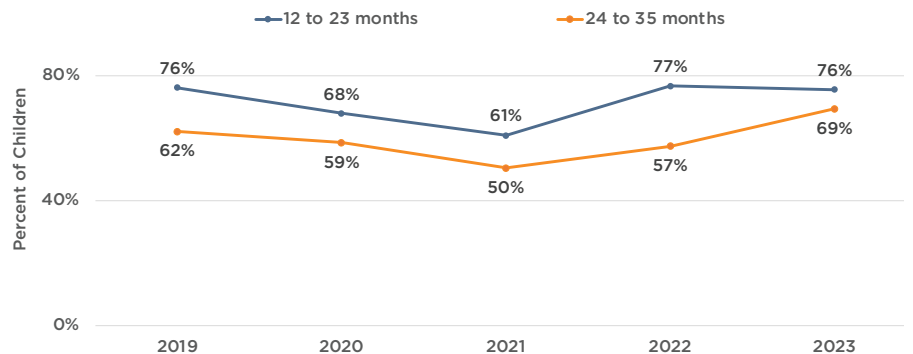
At this level, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends taking prompt action to identify and eliminate sources of lead exposure to reduce the harmful effects of lead.

1,142 NH children had elevated blood lead levels high enough to impair their ability to think, learn, and concentrate in 2023.



Although pediatric blood lead testing rates have recovered to pre-pandemic levels, testing rates for 1- and 2-year-old children are still not meeting state requirements.

**Figure 2:** Percentage of 1- and 2-year-old children tested for blood lead levels between 2019 and 2023

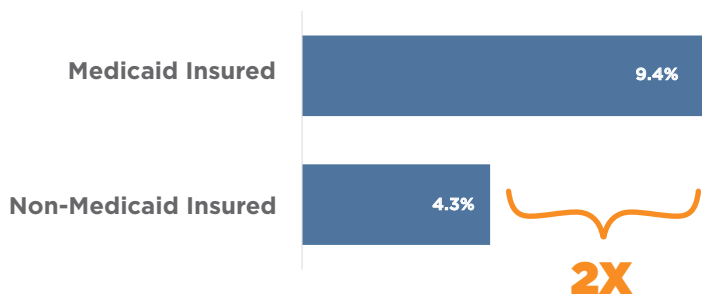


# 1 in every 10 children insured by Medicaid who received testing had elevated blood lead levels.

This is more than two times the rate of other children.

Children insured by Medicaid are at higher risk of lead exposure.

**Figure 3:** Percentage of children 72 months and younger who were tested and identified to have blood lead levels 3.5 µg/dL or higher

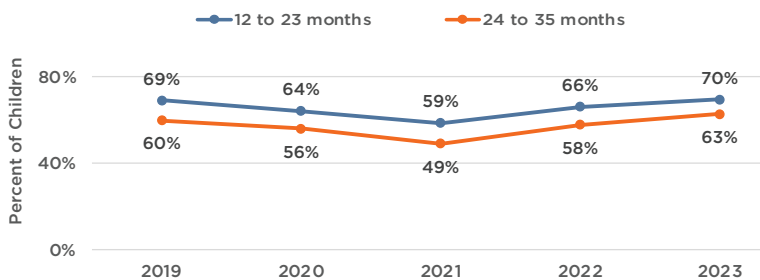


*Of the children tested, those insured by Medicaid were more than twice as likely to have an elevated blood lead level.*

## Testing Rates for Children Insured by Medicaid

Blood lead testing rates for children insured by Medicaid are not meeting state and federal requirements.

**Figure 4:** Percentage of 1- and 2-year-old children insured by Medicaid and tested for blood lead levels between 2019 and 2023



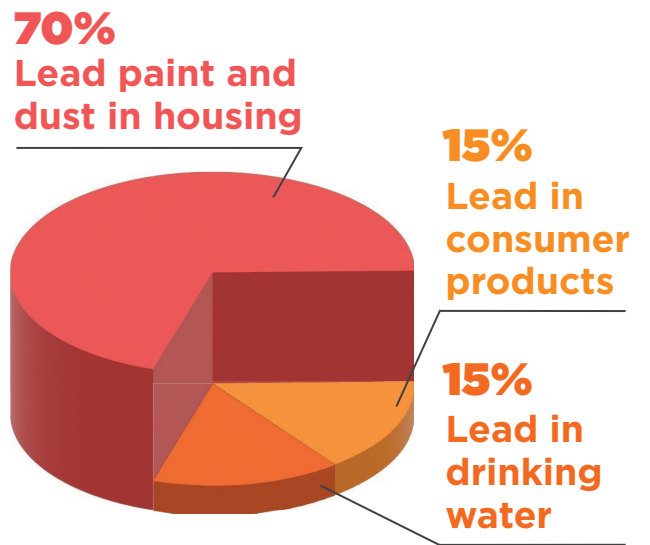
*All children enrolled in Medicaid are required by state and federal law to have a blood lead test at age 12 months and a second test at age 24 months.*

## Sources of Childhood Lead Exposure in the US

The most common source of exposure for young children in the US is lead paint and dust in older homes.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 5:** Percentage of childhood lead poisonings by source of lead exposure in the US<sup>1</sup>

Lead paint and dust in buildings built before 1978 account for up to 70% of elevated blood lead levels in US children.



# Building Strategies to Increase Lead-Safe Housing in NH

Four housing strategies for property owners to prevent childhood lead poisoning

**1. Lead Inspectors test for lead hazards and educate families** before they rent or purchase pre-1978 properties.

**2. Property owners perform inspection, repair, and cleaning practices** prior to occupancy, at unit turnover, following a complaint, and at least annually to prevent lead hazards.



**3. Contractors use lead-safe work practices** during all renovation, repair, and painting activities.

**4. Risk Assessors issue a lead-safe certificate** for all pre-1978 housing prior to occupancy.

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## NH's New Law Aims to Prevent Unsafe Housing and Child Care Centers from Being Added to the Market

RSA 130-A:5-d requires property owners to have a lead-safe certificate prior to occupancy in newly constructed rental properties and newly licensed child care facilities located in buildings constructed before 1978.

As of July 1, 2024, RSA 130-A:5-d requires the following buildings to have certification of lead safety prior to being used as either a residential rental unit or as a child care facility:

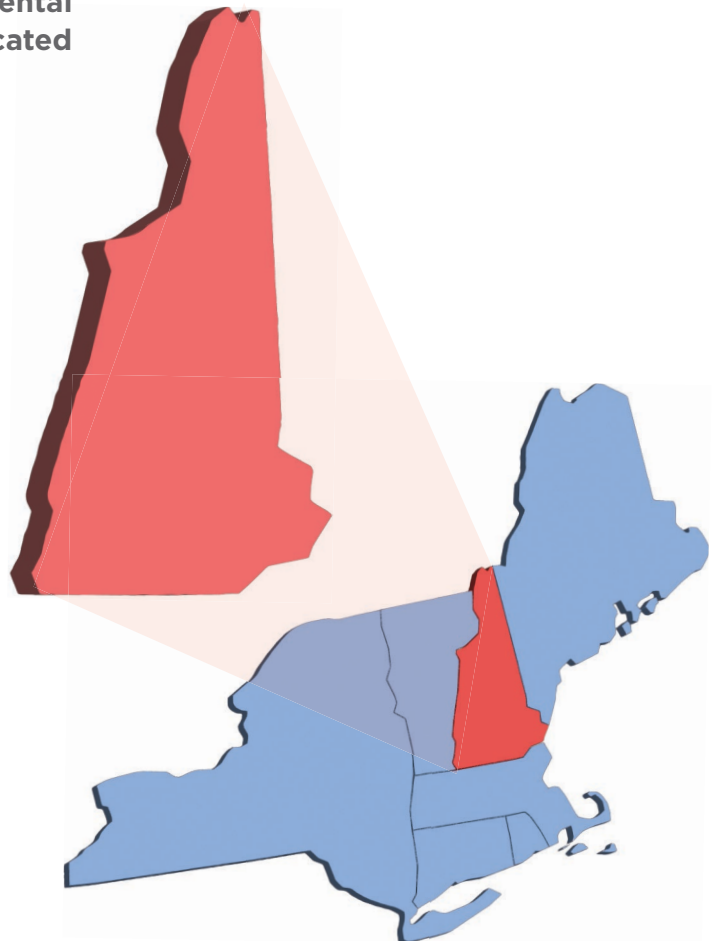
- I. "Newly constructed rental units within buildings erected prior to January 1, 1978. For the purposes of this section 'newly-constructed rental units' means rental units being converted from a use other than residential rental housing."
- II. "Newly-licensed day care facilities within buildings erected prior to January 1, 1978."

### What type of properties does this *not* apply to?

- Residential rental properties already in existence
- Owner-occupied homes
- Child care facilities that are already licensed



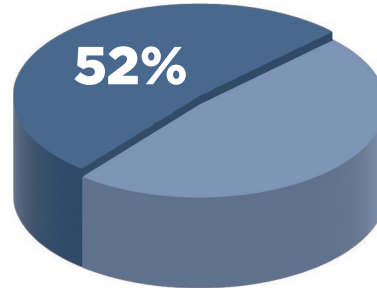
For additional information about the law, visit the DHHS website at [Dhhs.nh.gov/Leadinfo](https://Dhhs.nh.gov/Leadinfo).



# NH's Aging Housing Stock Puts Families at Risk for Lead Poisoning

**Figure 6:** Percentage of housing units across NH built before 1980.<sup>3</sup> The federal ban on lead in residential paint was in 1978.

New England has the oldest housing stock in the country.



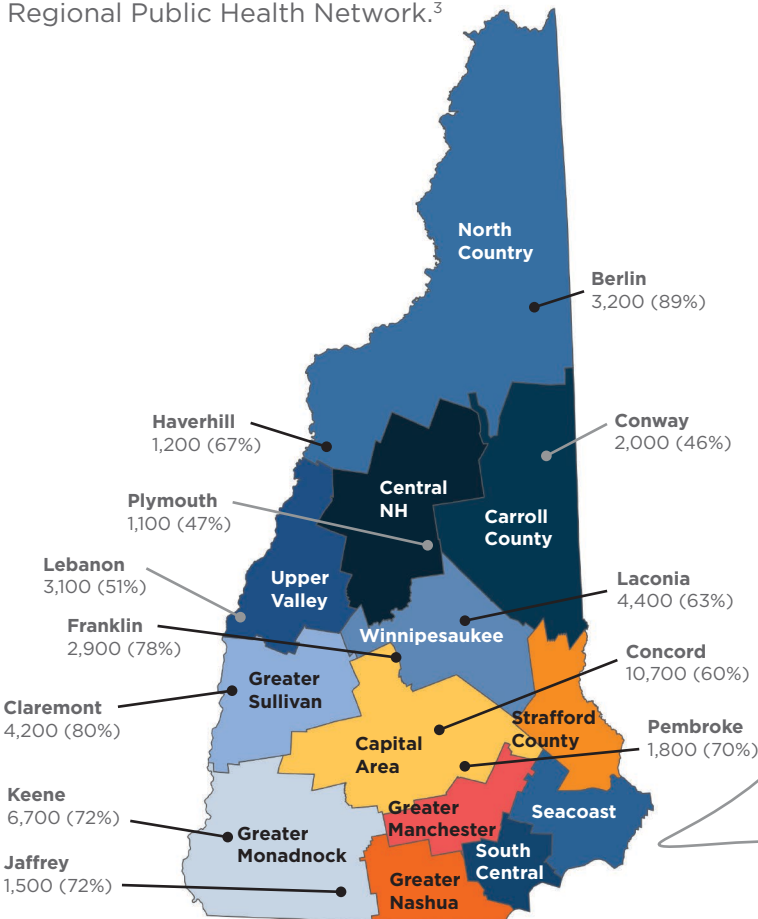
**Number of NH housing units built prior to 1980: 284,418 (52%)**

## There are at least 32,350 young NH children living in older housing units with lead paint.<sup>3</sup>

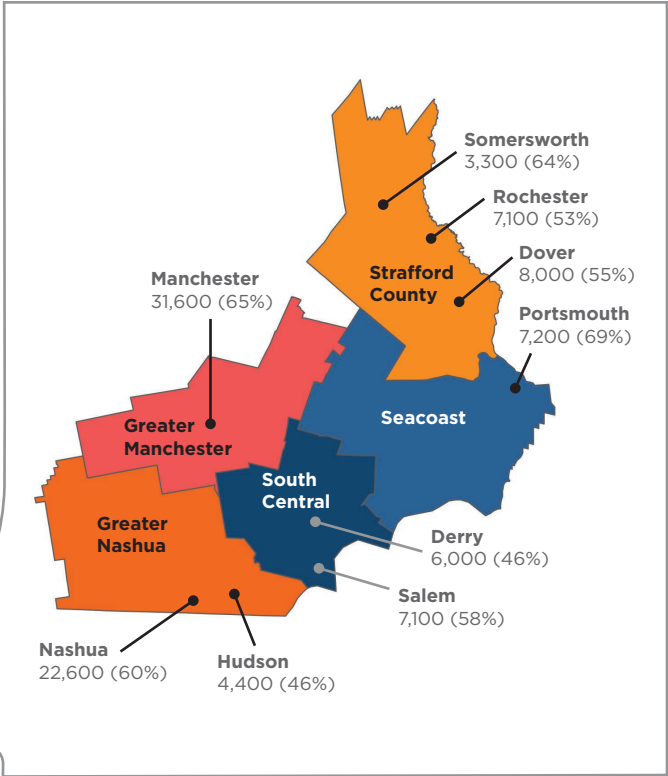
In some communities, the percentage of pre-1978 housing exceeds 70%.

Figures 7, 8, and 9 compare older housing, blood lead testing rates, and children with elevated blood lead levels in NH's 13 Regional Public Health Networks. The colors on the map used to depict individual public health networks correspond to colors used in Figure 9 to show children with elevated blood lead levels by region.

**Figure 7:** The number and percentage of occupied housing units built before 1980 (the federal ban on lead in residential paint was 1978) in certain towns by Regional Public Health Network.<sup>3</sup>

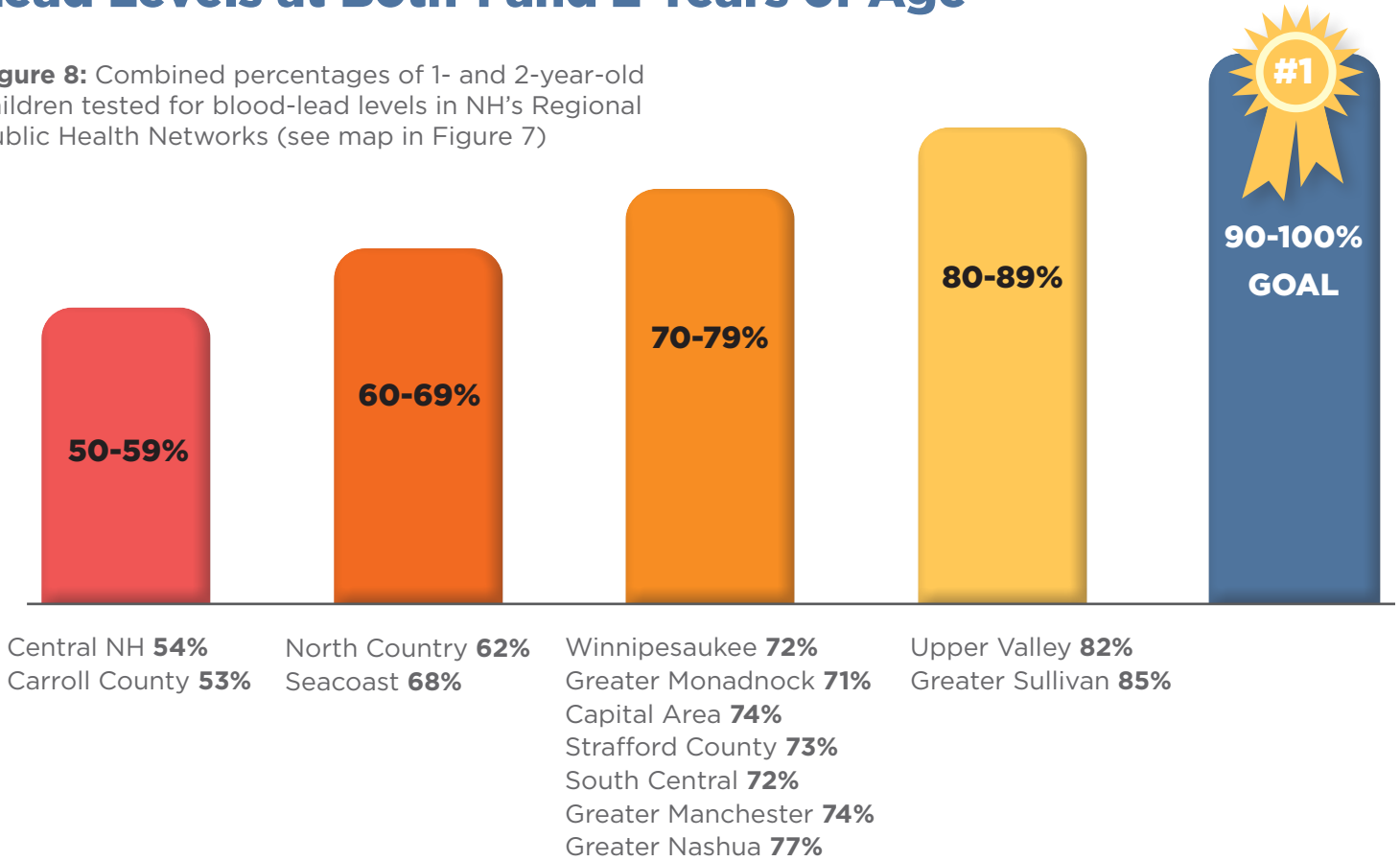


*Many NH communities have a high percentage of older housing and should consider local strategies to increase lead-safe housing.*

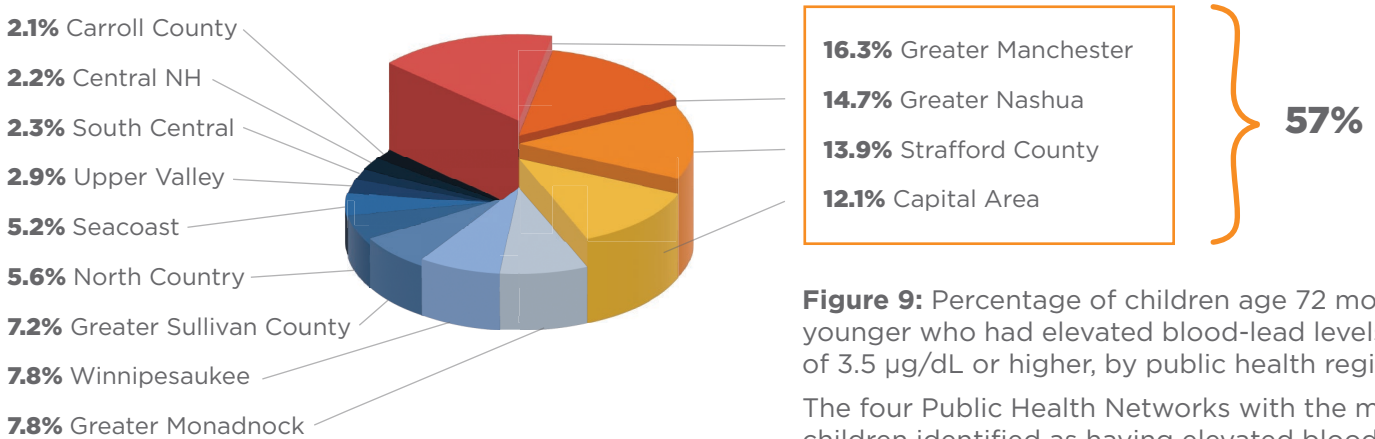


# All NH Children Should Be Tested for Elevated Blood Lead Levels at Both 1 and 2 Years of Age

**Figure 8:** Combined percentages of 1- and 2-year-old children tested for blood-lead levels in NH's Regional Public Health Networks (see map in Figure 7)



## Testing Rates May Have an Impact on Number of Children Identified with Elevated Blood Lead Levels



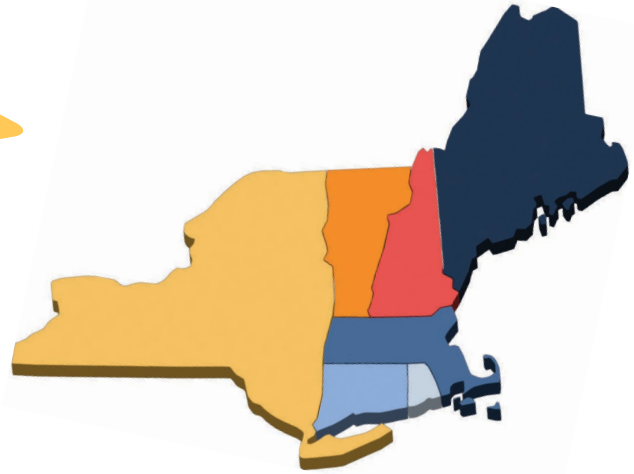
**Figure 9:** Percentage of children age 72 months and younger who had elevated blood-lead levels of 3.5 µg/dL or higher, by public health region

The four Public Health Networks with the most children identified as having elevated blood lead levels have testing rates higher than 70%. The two Public Health Networks with the fewest children identified as having elevated blood lead levels are testing less than 55% of their 1- and 2-year-old children. See Figure 8 above.

# Housing Strategies to Prevent Childhood Lead Exposure

Strategies that ensure lead-safe housing can reduce the number of children at risk for lead poisoning.

The northeast has the highest percentage of housing units built prior to the federal ban on lead in residential paint.<sup>2</sup>



## CONNECTICUT

- Licensed child care facilities are required to have a **Lead-Safe Certificate** and a plan for in-place management of remaining leaded surfaces
- **Local code enforcement officials** certified as lead inspectors/risk assessors

## MAINE

- **Paint can fee of 25 cents per gallon** of paint sold used for statewide and community-based prevention
- Requires property owners to participate in a statewide rental registry
- **Free dust wipe sample kits** for parents and property owners of pre-1978 properties

## MASSACHUSETTS

- Authority from **US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** to enforce the **Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) rule**
- Includes lead-paint hazards in state's **Minimum Housing Standards** for Human Habitation
- Requires all pre-1978 structures where a child under 6 years lives to be **lead-safe**

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

- Requires property owners to have a **Lead-Safe Certificate** prior to occupancy in newly constructed rental properties and newly licensed child care facilities located in pre-1978 buildings

## NEW YORK

- Requires owners of pre-1980 rental properties in designated Communities of Concern to participate in a **statewide rental registry**
- To achieve compliance with registry requirements, **Lead-Safe Certificate** must be submitted for all eligible units every 3 years

## RHODE ISLAND

- Authority from **EPA** to enforce the **RRP rule**
- Requires pre-1978 residential rentals to have a **Lead-Safe Certificate** every two years
- Requires property owners to participate in a **statewide rental registry**

## VERMONT

- Authority from **EPA** to enforce the **RRP rule** and added a required maintenance component to this rule
- **Presumes paint to be lead-based** unless proven otherwise
- Requires an annual **Inspection, Repair, and Cleaning (IRC) visual inspection** to certify there isn't any deteriorated paint and all window wells have protective inserts in pre-1978 residential rentals and child care facilities

<sup>1</sup> Levin R, Brown MJ, Kashtock ME, Jacobs DE, Whelan EA, Rodman J, et al. Lead exposures in U.S. children, 2008: implications for prevention. Environ Health Perspect. 2008;116(10):1285-93.

<sup>2</sup> 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey data estimates from US Census Bureau.

<sup>3</sup> Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data published by Housing and Urban Development on September 5, 2023, based on 2016-2020 5-Year American Community Survey data.



Department of  
**HEALTH &  
HUMAN SERVICES**

Division of  
Public Health

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