

## OVER FORTY YEARS OF LEAD POISONING IN CHILDREN --- THE CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE OF AMERICAN MEDICINE

As of 2017, more than half a million US children have lead poisoning. <https://www.aafp.org/afp/2019/0701/p24.html> For over 2,000 years humanity has documented the poisonous effects of lead. It is a preventable environmental toxin that has no biological role in the human body. Lead causes irreversible brain damage especially in children. Presently the law does not require testing of all children for dangerous lead levels. Compare this to PKU (Phenylketonuria).

PKU is a genetic disorder that causes irreversible brain damage. It can be found in 1 in 10,000 White newborns and 1 in 50,000 Black newborns. In 1963 a blood test for PKU was developed. Just a few years later in the late 1960's, *mandatory universal screening became the law*. (A special diet could prevent brain damage).

Lead poisoning causes irreversible brain damage. It can be found in 1 in 40 children, and Black children have the highest lead poisoning risk. In 1976 a blood test for lead was developed. (A life free of lead can prevent brain damage). Today in 2019, over 40 years later, there is still **no mandatory universal lead screening law in the US**.

The USPSTF (The US Preventative Service Task Forces), in its 2019 report to Congress stated: "the current evidence is

insufficient to assess *the balance of benefits and harms of screening for elevated blood levels*". The potential harms of trying to help more than half a million children who are disproportionately Black, are listed by the USPSTF as: ***cost and possible side effects of treatment for severe lead poisoning.***

<https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Document/RecommendationStatementFinal/elevated-blood-lead-levels-in-childhood-and-pregnancy-screening>

In 2012 the CDC, (Center for Disease Control) stated that there is *no safe level of lead in children's blood*. What did the great believers in family values, the politicians in Congress, do with this information? In 2012 Congress **cut** the CDC lead program budget by \$27 million.

"Requiring industries to prove that chemicals are not toxic before they are put on the market or emitted by polluting industries is the only way to protect children".

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/140/2/e20171400>

We need a political economy that does just that. The economic system we have now puts profit over people. It's time for change.

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