

Poison threat to children

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Unless President Nixon signs it today, a bill which would help cities move against the "silent epidemic" of lead paint poisoning in small children will die by pocket veto.

As federal legislation goes, the measure would not be very costly — \$10 million for the current fiscal year, \$20 million for the next, on a 75-25 matching basis. But it would be a significant help, say local health department officials.

The problem is confined almost entirely to deteriorating homes built before 1940, roughly the time when other bases took the place of lead in interior paint. In these "lead belt" poverty-area homes, the paint peels off and children, usually between the ages of 1 and 6, eat it. It tastes good—"like a cordial candy," one doctor reported.

It is anything but candy, though. It kills, lesser doses cause blindness, mental retardation, deafness, kidney disease. From 250,000 to 400,000 children are suffering from lead poisoning effects at any given time throughout the country.

In Philadelphia last year 244 cases of lead poisoning were reported, none fatal. The city also investigated 1,200

homes of children whose blood was discovered by hospitals or doctors to have higher than normal lead levels.

The funds in the bill would go partly to help cities give blood tests to children in the "lead belts" and help treat those with abnormally high lead levels in their blood.

Other funds would be used to inspect homes for lead paint and enforce local regulations; in Philadelphia home owners can be forced to get such paint hazards removed. The best way of getting rid of it is burning it off. Because of fire hazards, it is not recommended that owner occupants try it without training.

The Administration has objected that the bill objectives can be achieved under the existing Public Health Service Act. Some lead poisoning projects have been carried out under that law. But too often such projects get lost in priority listings for limited funds.

An estimated 200,000 dwelling units in Philadelphia's "lead belt" are said to pose a potential lead poison threat, and we are only one city. Clearly, the bill will not solve the whole problem. But it would help the cities get on with the solution.

JAN 14 1971 E Barrett Asks Nixon to Sign Lead Paint Bill

Bulletin Washington Bureau

Washington — Rep. William A. Barrett (D-Pa) urged President Nixon yesterday to sign into law a bill providing \$30 million over the next two years for the detection, elimination and medical treatment of lead paint poisoning.

If the measure, which Barrett shepherded through the House, is not signed by midnight tonight, it will be the victim of a presidential pocket veto.

There is considerable opposition to the bill within the Nixon Administration because it would create still another category of federal aid to local governments in the face of administration efforts to consolidate as many of these grant programs as possible.

New Health Program

In addition, the administration is working on a broad-based health program for submission to the new Congress, and has opposed several smaller health proposals in potential conflict with its plans.

The bill would make available \$10 million for the remainder of the current fiscal year and \$20 million for next year in grants to local governments to detect and eliminate the causes of lead-paint poisoning and to provide treatment to the poison victims.

Distribution of Funds

Part of the money would go to the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare for research to identify the problem and develop new treatment techniques.

Barrett, in a telegram to the President of the Western White House, San Clemente, Calif., said that testimony before the House Subcommittee on housing, which he heads, disclosed that "hundreds of small children and infants die every year from the ingestion of chips or flakes of lead-painting paint and plaster and thousands of others suffer brain damage, blindness and other physical handicaps."

He asked the President to "please help save the children from this man-made silent epidemic."

U.S. Warns of Lead Contact in Mugs

By MILES CUNNINGHAM.

Of The Bulletin Staff

Certain large pottery mugs imported from Italy contain dangerous levels of lead, the Food and Drug Administration said today. Called "Jumbo Cups," they have tested as high as 1,200

parts per million (ppm) of lead, the FDA reported. The FDA permits no more than 7 ppm.

Lead is used in the glazing process, and when it can be drawn off by certain acidic foods, the product is said to be leachable. Such pottery can cause lead poisoning, a sometimes fatal illness.

The mugs, "J-11 288" are on the bottom of the mugs. FDA said 1,051 were imported in 15 foreign states up to 1968. They are sold by the San Rafael, Calif. The firm said it was recalling retail stocks, but doubted much remains in stores since the pattern has been distributed since 1960.

FDA Recalls 400,000 Pieces of Pottery

Washington — (UPI) — The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a recall of 400,000 pieces of California-made pottery yesterday after lead from the pottery glaze reportedly fatally poisoned a baby.

The FDA said the suspect pottery, most of which has been sold, was made by Melior Pottery, Inc., Manhattan Beach, Calif., and includes plates, cups, saucers, pitchers, creamers, bowls and glasses. A Melior spokesman said the plates are labeled "Poppy Trail Melior, made in California" but the other pieces are not labeled.

The firm said it was recalling retail stocks, but doubted much remains in stores since the pattern has been distributed since 1960.

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