



June 10, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

During the May 20, 2025, hearing of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee on the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Budget request, you were asked to clarify the status of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. You offered to follow up with more specifics, which we have not yet received, and to provide responses in a timely manner. We have included additional questions below and ask that you respond no later than June 16, 2025:

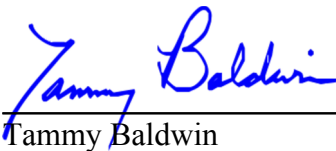
1. Is the CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program operational? Does the Program currently have any staff? If so, how many staff? How many staff were working for the Program as of January 20, 2025 compared to now?
2. Soon after the April 1, 2025 reduction in force (RIF), you noted in an interview that some of the terminations could "be mistakes." Was the decision to terminate the staff within the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention branch a mistake?
3. HHS has reinstated some employees previously terminated by the RIFs, citing health and safety concerns. Does HHS have the ability to reinstate employees from the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention branch in order to deploy to areas like Milwaukee, Wisconsin that are in need of assistance?
4. During the hearing, reiterating a comment you made the week prior at a HELP Committee hearing, you said, if Congress appropriates the funding for the CDC Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, it will be spent. Has CDC released fiscal year 2025 funding to the 62 states and localities it supports to address gaps in service? How much funding has been spent by the Program in fiscal year 2025? How much funding has been spent by the Program since January 20, 2025?

5. The fiscal year 2026 budget request proposes continuing funding for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program outside of CDC and within the proposed Administration for a Healthy America. How does HHS plan to effectuate this program when all program staff have reportedly been terminated? Does HHS plan to hire new experts?
6. During the hearing, when asked about the status of the Program, you said that a team from the Program was on the ground in Milwaukee to deal with the ongoing crisis of lead contamination in schools. The City of Milwaukee has refuted that claim. Has CDC sent any staff to Milwaukee in response to their request for technical assistance to help with the lead issue in schools? This request is unrelated to the support that was provided to the state last month to certify and calibrate lab equipment.
7. Has the CDC deployed any teams or provided technical assistance related to the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program since the April 1st reductions in force at HHS? Please outline any activities or work conducted by the Program since this date.
8. The Rhode Island Department of Health is in year four of a five-year grant from the CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Will CDC follow through on its commitment and provide year five funding later this year?

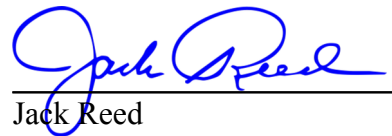
The CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program has played an essential role for many years in identifying lead hazards in homes and the associated risk to children and helping direct resources to the families and communities most in need. We look forward to your timely responses to these questions, as your answers will help inform the Subcommittee's fiscal year 2026 bill.

Again, thank you for your testimony and your commitment to follow up on our questions.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator

