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**NUMBER OF CHILDREN REPORTED LEAD POISONED GROWS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR;
CONTINUATION OF LOCAL PREVENTION EFFORTS NEEDED TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE**

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – The Monroe County Department of Public Health's most recent data on testing children for elevated blood lead levels (EBLL) indicates that while Monroe County and the City of Rochester are making significant progress in the campaign to end childhood lead poisoning, there is still more work to be done. The statistics regarding testing data for children under the age of six show that the number of children diagnosed with EBLLs above 10µg/dL (micrograms per deciliter) has increased from 139 in 2014 to 206 in 2015.

Although no amount of lead in the body is normal, blood lead levels of 5-9µg/dL or higher are now considered 'elevated'. Three years ago, the Monroe County Department of Public Health began tracking elevated blood lead levels between 5-9µg/dL. In 2015, 782 children were reported with elevated blood lead levels between 5-9µg/dL making a total of 988 children in Monroe County considered "lead poisoned."

"The effort to eradicate lead poisoning in our community has truly been a public health success story," said Dr. Michael Mendoza, Interim Commissioner of the Monroe County Department of Public Health. "Since 2004, our community's collaborative efforts have reduced the number of lead poisoned children by a remarkable 85 percent." Mendoza added. "While we should all be very proud of this achievement, we must continue to keep lead poisoning prevention as one of our priorities."

"The City of Rochester is committed to continuing our community partnership with Monroe County, the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning, and our property owners to eliminate childhood lead poisoning," said Mayor Lovely A. Warren. "The health of our community is a top priority as we work to create safer more vibrant neighborhoods, more jobs, and better educational opportunities for our children. Despite the progress our area has made since the inception of our Lead Ordinance, the numbers are a clear indication of the need to continue these efforts. I encourage parents of one and two-year-old children to have them tested for lead and ask that all property owners work proactively to ensure all structures built prior to 1978 are safe from lead hazards." Mayor Warren also reminds

property owners to take advantage of the grant opportunities provided by both the City and County to replace windows that are the main source of lead hazards.

“We have made great progress over the past 10 years since the implementation of the Rochester’s Lead Law in 2006, however we still have a lot of work to do to finish the job,” stated Mel Callan, a family nurse practitioner at Highland Family Medicine and co-chair of the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning. Callan continued, “In the past year, 988 Rochester area children had unacceptably high blood lead levels—enough to fill more than 40 kindergarten classrooms. Children are particularly susceptible to the irreversible and devastating effects of lead poisoning. We must raise the awareness of families to get their homes tested for lead hazards and get their children tested at ages one and again at two to avoid any possible developmental damage.”

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The Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning wants to remind everyone that lead poisoning, although completely preventable, can inflict permanent damage to the most vulnerable members of the community—our children. Information on getting your home and children tested for lead hazards, and how to get EPA Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) certified in accordance with federal law can be found at the Coalition web site www.letsmakeleadhistory.org or by calling (585) 224-3125.