

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 23, 2009

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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Commonwealth News Bureau
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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECEIVES RECOVERY FUNDS FOR NEW HEALTHY HOMES PROGRAM

HARRISBURG – The Department of Health has received a grant for nearly \$900,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, to implement a new program aimed at improving the environmental safety of foster homes in Erie and Philadelphia.

“The Healthy Homes program is a national initiative that focuses on identifying housing related hazards for children such as mold, radon, and lead,” said Secretary Everette James.

“Through the Healthy Homes program, we will be able to assess foster homes in those two cities for environmental dangers and offer education, and in some cases intervention, to correct the hazard. This program will help insure that for these children home is a safe place to grow up. ”

Homes enrolled in the Healthy Homes Foster Care Program will receive a complete environmental home assessment, which includes the identification of multiple health and safety hazards including lead, mold, moisture, vectors, poisons and child safety concerns.

Erie and Philadelphia were chosen based on a needs assessment conducted by the department that looked at factors including the age of the house, housing stock, and the number of young children residing in the home. In addition, HUD strongly encouraged applicants to select partners with existing Lead Hazard Control Programs, a requirement that both these cities met.

Following home assessments, all families will be educated about how to reduce health and safety risks in their homes and will be provided supplies that will help to maintain a safe and healthy house. Some qualifying homes will undergo remediation completed by contractors to improve the conditions of the home.

The Healthy Homes Foster Care Program also will:

- Educate families about injury prevention and environmental health hazards;
- Reduce allergen and moisture levels in homes receiving remediation;
- Reduce the number of asthmatic episodes of participating residents; and
- Increase public awareness of housing related environmental health and safety hazards that threaten the health children.

For more information about the Healthy Homes Foster Care Program, please visit

www.health.state.pa.us.

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