

My name is [Dr. Amy Nevin](#), I've been a physician for 27 years.

As a pediatrician, and fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I spent many years of my career as a pediatrician in the Beltzhoover and surrounding Hilltop communities of Allegheny County. I currently care for families in Butler, a rural community which also struggles from the aging infrastructure we all share in Pennsylvania, whether in rural or urban areas.

For decades, I have had a deep interest in preventing lead exposure to our commonwealth's children. Like Dr. Moss, I was also tapped by the County Executive Rich Fitzgerald to serve on the lead task force in the wake of Flint, Michigan.

Why?

There are so many threats to childhood learning in terms of adverse childhood experiences, but lead is one that I know we can conquer, if we just put in the time, education, and money to do so.

This bill directly addresses this need.

Preventing lead exposure in children early, and preventing ongoing exposure, is the only way to avoid permanent brain damage to kids.

In my work, I have seen numerous cases of elevated lead levels in children as young as 9 months of age. But I have also seen elevated levels in kids headed to kindergarten.

Stories of lead exposures in my career have included many- A crack in a wall which seemed minor, old paint on a front porch where children played, outdoor house paint blowing lead into the backyard play area of a young child, and even dust.

But, as noted by the lead research expert Bruce Lamphear nearly 30 years ago, an estimated 20% of contributions to increased blood lead levels in young children were due to exposure through water.

Our children remain at risk.

Once deposited in the bones, lead leaches into the blood and affects the brain for years.

Damage is then permanent- affecting IQ and educational potential.

Limiting ongoing exposure to lead decreases the risk of lead-poisoning- related specific learning difficulties, hyperactivity, and impulse control. Given the severe complexities to self, and society, that such problems can cause, it makes absolute good sense to focus on early prevention of such problems. All efforts to limit this poisonous heavy metal's effect on our children's brains make great public health sense.

The American Academy of Pediatric policy, Prevention Of Childhood Lead Toxicity recognizes that there is NO safe lead level for children. The estimation of loss of IQ points in blood lead concentrations  $\geq 5$  is 5-6, even when adjusting for other factors.

Despite the press attention several years ago, families may not realize the threat of lead exposure is still ever-present.

In short, many people are unaware that their children are still being poisoned, or where it might happen.

But we can successfully reduce this poisonous heavy metal effect on our children's brains.

I urge the state of PA to continue to support Senate bill 759, to ensure that only safe, filtered water reaches our children at schools. I would also suggest that we prioritize first schools with Pre-K and elementary grades, as those are our youngest and most vulnerable. The earlier exposure is prevented, the higher potential impact.

We know as pediatricians that brain development continues well past age 20, so this indeed makes sense for all schools. I commend these actions to support our kids, and our society.

Sincerely,  
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