Today’s piece was prepared by Michelle Kerr, MD, based on an article in the Seattle Times, More children will be tested for lead under lawsuit settlement.

<http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/more-children-will-be-tested-for-lead-under-lawsuit-settlement/>

A low-income Washington mother celebrates the victory of fighting Medicaid to cover the cost of screening her children for lead poisoning. In the late 1990s, the federal government discontinued its policy of universal screening of lead levels in children in Washington state due to the beliefs that the risk factors and prevalence of lead poisoning were low and limited resources should be reallocated and spent elsewhere. However, recent studies have demonstrated that the risk of lead poisoning in Washington state is higher than previously thought, prompting this mother to advocate a class-action lawsuit forcing the state to expand its lead screening to low-income children.

This article is a win for pediatric advocacy as lead poisoning is known to be detrimental to the neurodevelopment of children, affecting learning and cognition. The article also includes links to excellent resources, outlining both why it is important to screen for lead levels in young children and the risk factors for developing lead poisoning. There is also an interactive map that parents can access to determine the relative risk of lead poisoning in their particular neighborhood, which is based on the average age of the housing and the average income-level in that area.

This article 1) demonstrates how important it is to advocate for children, especially of low-income, and 2) disseminates accurate and user friendly information to parents about a relevant topic that affects the development of their children. This lawsuit may allows pediatricians in Washington state to successfully expand their lead level screening, especially to children of low-income families.

The following resources may help:

**RESOURCES ON BLOOD LEAD LEVEL RISKS AND TESTING:**

* Washington Tracking Network *an interactive map of lead-exposure risk by region*

<https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtn/WTNIBL/>

* A Targeted Approach to Blood Lead Screening in WA State *Department of Health Lead Level Expert Panel 2015*

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2644455-Expert-Panel-Childhood-Lead-Screening-Guidelines.html>

* Algorithm for Lead Level Testing Recommendations *Dep’t of Health*

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2644454-Clinical-Algorithm-for-Targeted-Childhood-Lead.html>

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!