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**CLEVELAND CLINIC COMMITS \$2.5 MILLION TO LEAD SAFE CLEVELAND COALITION TO ADVANCE LEAD POISONING PREVENTION EFFORTS WITH UNITED WAY**

*The hospital's five-year investment will go to the Lead Safe Fund to help create lead safe homes in Cleveland*

CLEVELAND (Thursday, Sept. 9, 2021) – The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition has received a \$2.5 million gift from Cleveland Clinic to the Lead Safe Home Fund. The five-year financial commitment will help support a collaboration with United Way of Greater Cleveland to remove harmful sources of lead exposure from local homes.

An estimated 67% of all housing units across the state were built before 1980 and contain lead-based hazards, according to the [Ohio Department of Health](#). Children living in Cuyahoga County are at the highest risk for lead exposure, and Cleveland is at the epicenter of this health crisis with lead poisoning rates topping nearly four times the national average.

Cleveland Clinic's \$2.5 million gift toward advancing the work of the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition's lead poisoning prevention efforts is the single largest gift to United Way of Greater Cleveland's Impact Institute and one of the top ten largest commitments made to United Way in the organization's history.

"For far too long, children in Cleveland have been robbed of the ability to live up to their full potential because of lead poisoning," said Augie Napoli, President and CEO of United Way of Greater Cleveland a founding member of the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition Steering Committee. "United Way and the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition are continuing to work closely with partners across our community to find innovative, long-term solutions to ensure safe and healthy housing options are available to all families and children living in Cleveland, and we're grateful to the Cleveland Clinic for supporting that important, life-saving work through their \$2.5 million investment."

The Lead Safe Home Fund, a first-of-its-kind, public-private sector partnership, provides families and property owners with the resources they need to make homes lead safe. This, along with investments from the public sector, private sector, and other philanthropic partners brings the total pool of funds to nearly \$45 million.

"Our communities can only be safe and healthy when every person has the opportunity to live in a safe and healthy home," said Cleveland Clinic CEO and President Tom Mihaljevic, M.D. "It is our goal to create the healthiest communities for everyone. By providing direct support to the communities and partnering with existing organizations like United Way and the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition, our neighbors can prosper and live healthy lives."

Expected, near-term outcomes include the following: feasible and equitable Lead Safe Certificate implementation; healthy homes, safe from lead, across the City of Cleveland; expansion of the qualified lead-safe workforce, with an emphasis on training and hiring Cleveland residents; training and financial aid to qualifying landlords; and widespread lead poisoning prevention education and outreach.



Cleveland Clinic is actively engaged in screening, treating and preventing childhood lead exposure and poisoning. Each year, Cleveland Clinic Children’s providers screen thousands of youth for elevated blood lead levels in its primary care offices and through its school-based healthcare mobile unit. In addition, the hospital is implementing a best practice protocol to flag pediatric patients with high lead levels in its EPIC (electronic health records) system. These patients will receive ongoing medical care and counseling, education and referral to a network of community resources and support services in their county.

The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition launched in 2019 to address lead poisoning through a comprehensive, preventive, and long-term approach. This approach protects Cleveland’s children by merging smart, adaptable public policies with knowledgeable agencies willing to collaborate; proven community programs and leaders; and public and private sector accountability.

“Lead poisoning is a public health crisis with a housing solution. This Cleveland Clinic investment underscores the fact that safe, decent housing improves health outcomes,” said Kim Foreman, Executive Director of Environmental Health Watch and the Lead Safe Resource Center, and a member of the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition Steering Committee. “Lead poisoning affects us all and we all have a responsibility to address it. Thank you to the Cleveland Clinic for understanding this collective responsibility and joining the work to ensure that no child is poisoned by lead.”

Initial support for the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition came from the Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, the Saint Luke’s Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, the Bruening Foundation, the Sisters of Charity Foundation, the Third Federal Foundation and United Way of Greater Cleveland. Today, the Coalition includes more than 500 members representing housing (including both landlord and tenant interests), health care, community development, government, philanthropy, academia, and neighborhood advocates. The Lead Safe Home Fund includes investments from the public sector (State of Ohio, Cuyahoga County, the City of Cleveland), philanthropy, and private sector (banks, CDFIS, and healthcare institutions).

On June 21, 2019, United Way of Greater Cleveland and the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition held the Lead Safe Cleveland Summit to raise awareness about lead poisoning, participate in collaborative discussions and develop long-term solutions to prevent lead poisoning and create a lead-safe city for all Clevelanders.

On Friday, Sept. 10, United Way will host its Annual Community Meeting virtually at 4 p.m. Registration is complimentary and open to all at [www.unitedwaycleveland.org](http://www.unitedwaycleveland.org).

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#### About Cleveland Clinic

[Cleveland Clinic](http://www.clevelandclinic.org) – now in its centennial year – is a nonprofit multispecialty academic medical center that integrates clinical and hospital care with research and education. Located in Cleveland, Ohio, it was founded in 1921 by four renowned physicians with a vision of providing outstanding patient care based upon the principles of cooperation, compassion and innovation. Cleveland Clinic has pioneered many [medical breakthroughs](#), including coronary artery bypass surgery and the first face transplant in the United States. *U.S. News & World Report* consistently names Cleveland Clinic as one of the nation’s best hospitals in its annual “America’s Best Hospitals”



survey. Among Cleveland Clinic's 70,800 employees worldwide are more than 4,660 salaried physicians and researchers, and 18,500 registered nurses and advanced practice providers, representing 140 medical specialties and subspecialties. Cleveland Clinic is a 6,500-bed health system that includes a 173-acre main campus near downtown Cleveland, 19 hospitals, more than 220 outpatient facilities, and locations in southeast Florida; Las Vegas, Nevada; Toronto, Canada; Abu Dhabi, UAE; and London, England. In 2020, there were 8.7 million total outpatient visits, 273,000 hospital admissions and observations, and 217,000 surgical cases throughout Cleveland Clinic's health system. Patients came for treatment from every state and 185 countries. Visit us at [clevelandclinic.org](http://clevelandclinic.org). Follow us at [twitter.com/ClevelandClinic](https://twitter.com/ClevelandClinic). News and resources available at [newsroom.clevelandclinic.org](http://newsroom.clevelandclinic.org). **Editor's Note:** [Cleveland Clinic News Service](#) is available to provide broadcast-quality interviews and B-roll upon request.

### **About Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition**

The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition is an inclusive, public-private partnership founded to address lead poisoning. This approach protects Cleveland's children by merging smart, adaptable public policies; knowledgeable agencies willing to collaborate; proven community programs and leaders; and public and private sector accountability. With community voice embedded in all aspects, the Coalition is working on: 1) Supporting and measuring the City of Cleveland's Lead Safe Certificate system, 2) Developing a lead safe workforce, 3) Rolling out a public awareness campaign, 4) Advocating for state and federal lead safe policies and resources, 5) Securing investments into the Lead Safe Home Fund, and 6) Launching the Lead Safe Resource Center (administered by Environmental Health Watch) and Home Loans and Grants ( Today, the Coalition has over 450 members and six working committees and continues to grow. Website: [www.leadSAFEcle.org](http://www.leadSAFEcle.org) Email: [info@leadSAFEcle.org](mailto:info@leadSAFEcle.org) Social Media: @LeadSafeCLE, #LeadSafeCLE

### **About United Way of Greater Cleveland**

Founded in 1913, United Way of Greater Cleveland is a local, independent nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting poverty across the Greater Cleveland area. The largest private-sector investor of health and human services, United Way invests in efforts that address poverty using a two-pronged approach. The first prong focuses on the daily issues affecting those living in poverty, the Community Hub for Basic Needs. The second drives research and innovation through the Impact Institute, a think tank with an action plan, focused on identifying long-term solutions to break the cycle of poverty. For more information, visit [www.unitedwaycleveland.org](http://www.unitedwaycleveland.org).