



Immediate Release

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**Herkimer HealthNet Announces LeadCare II Finger Prick Lead Testing
During National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week**

Herkimer, NY - Herkimer HealthNet has placed four LeadCare II Units in Herkimer and Oneida Counties this year thanks to a grant they received from Excellus BlueCross BlueShield.

LeadCare II is a point of care finger prick lead testing unit that is a faster and less intrusive process for children and parents compared to a venous draw process. According to the NY State Department of Health in 2014, approximately one-third of children in Herkimer and Oneida Counties were not tested by ages one and two as required by NY State law.

HealthNet has also been a partner with The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties in support of the Lead-Free Mohawk Valley Coalition. The initiative of the coalition is aimed at eliminating childhood lead poisoning in Herkimer and Oneida Counties by 2030. Early detection of lead poisoning in children is critical in identifying and providing needed support to children and families. Early detection can result in implementing environmental controls to lessen the risk for continued lead exposure and identify children in need of medical intervention.

Thomas C. Curnow, Executive Director of HealthNet said, "New York State law mandates two lead tests for children on or before ages one and two. When a physician writes an order for a child's lead test at a laboratory, it is still common for the order to be unfilled. Difficulty in getting the child to a laboratory site or simply 'putting off the visit' are common reasons for not getting the lead test. The closer the LeadCare II point-of-care system is to the exam room, the better the chances are that same day testing can be completed. We have received verbal feedback from healthcare providers that they are reaching a greater percentage of their patients. We hope to start seeing a comparison of the data from the New York State Department of Health as early as April, 2018."

In 2017 HealthNet has placed four LeadCare II units at Adirondack Internal Medicine & Pediatrics, 1 Oxford Road, New Hartford; Herkimer Family Nurse Practitioners, 237 East Steele Street, Herkimer; and Little Falls Hospital's Patient Centered Medical Homes at their 3085 Bridge Street, Newport and 9 Gibson Street, Dolgeville locations.

In 2018, HealthNet will facilitate the placement of three more LeadCare II Blood Level Testing Systems and start-up supplies in healthcare practices in Herkimer and Oneida County clinics and physicians' offices to support point-of-care screening of children. The LeadCare II System is designed for the quantitative measurement of lead in fresh whole blood. As an approved CLIA-waived test, any employee of an office or laboratory operating under a CLIA Certificate of Waiver can perform the screening following the manufacturer's instructions. HealthNet encourages interested healthcare providers to call their offices at (315) 867-1576.

Curnow also stated that a portion of the grant funding will allow HealthNet to promote lead screening in children through a marketing campaign to inform the public of this serious health issue.

The grant's total is approximately \$50,500. HealthNet has been working with Herkimer County Public Health, the Oneida County Health Department, and the Lead-Free Mohawk Valley Coalition to identify healthcare practices willing to accept placement of the LeadCare II Systems.

HealthNet is a 501(C)3 non-profit corporation. Its mission is to improve the health and well-being of individuals. For More information, call HealthNet at (315) 867-1576.

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