
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, and Water

February 21, 2022

André Ourso
Center Administrator
Center for Health Protection
Public Health Division

PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION
Drinking Water Services

Oregon
Health
Authority

Health Effects of Lead

Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health.



Damage to the
brain and
nervous system



Slowed growth
and development



Learning and
behavior problems



Hearing and
speech problems

This can cause:



Lower IQ

Decreased ability to pay attention

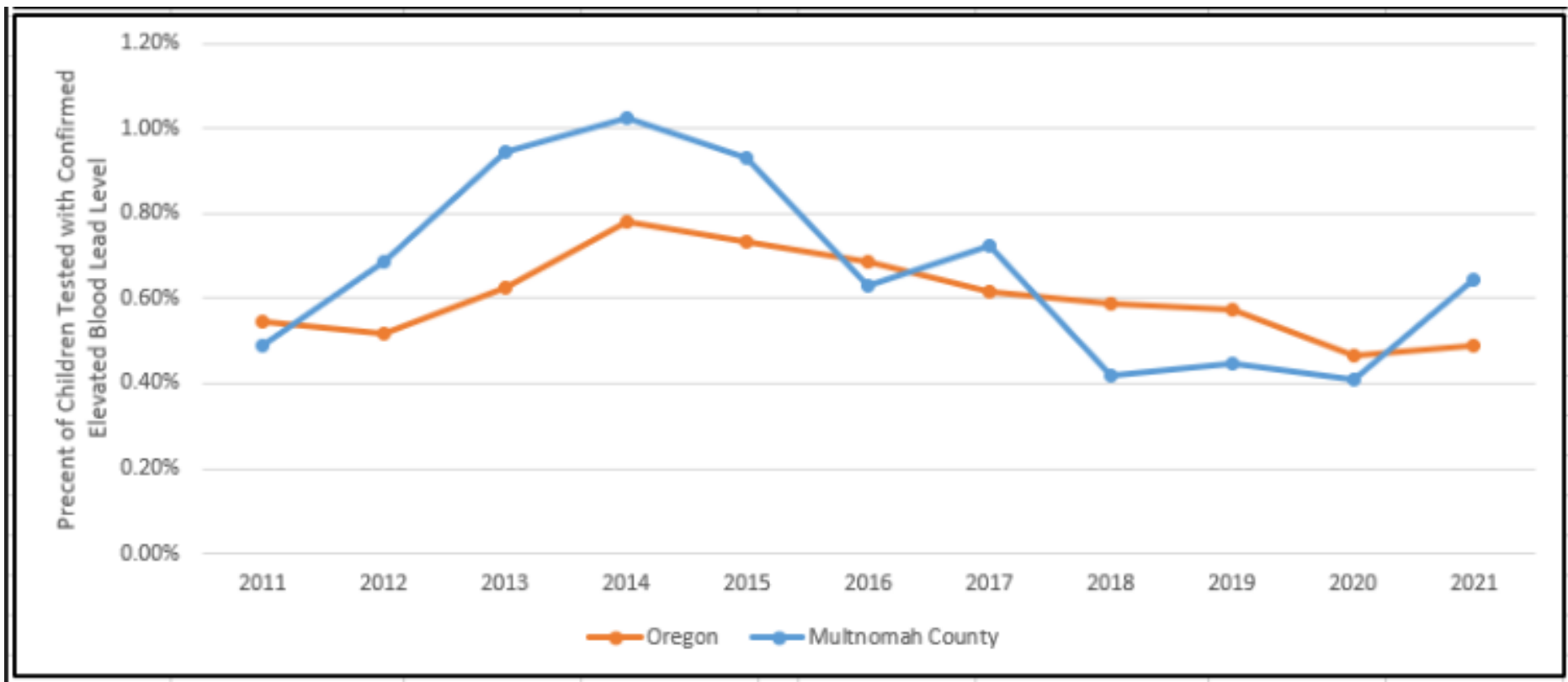
Underperformance in school



Sources of lead exposure



Oregon Child Blood Lead Data Trends



Regulation of Drinking Water



- OHA Drinking Water Services has primacy to implement federal Safe Drinking Water Act rules in Oregon.
- OHA regulates public water systems, including Portland, to ensure compliance with applicable rules.
- EPA oversees State primacy agencies to ensure they meet federal program guidelines and standards.

Drinking Water rules for Lead



- Oregon has restrictions on the use of lead in distribution and plumbing since 1985.
- No known lead service lines.
- Lead and Copper Rule basics:
 - Rules require monitoring of minimum number of home taps at highest risk for lead in plumbing, e.g. presence of lead solder
 - Intent is as a check on the corrosivity of water and need for corrosion control treatment or “optimization” of existing treatment.
 - 15 ppb Action Level (AL) is based on the 90th percentile level, i.e. 10% of tap sample results >15 ppb. Not a health-based level. Measures lead leaching into water due to corrosivity.
 - Action Level Exceedances are not violations, trigger actions to reduce risk.

Drinking Water rules for Lead



- Portland compliance strategy unique:
 - Lead Hazard Reduction Program approved as equivalent to “optimized” corrosion control in terms of risk reduction since the mid-1990’s. Only minimal treatment to adjust pH, but free lead in water testing and programs to address other sources of lead.
- Lead AL exceedances drive need for treatment:
 - Periodic Lead AL exceedances prompted agreement in 2016-17 for additional treatment.
 - Compliance schedule requires construction of treatment facilities by April 30, 2022.
 - Fall 2021 AL exceedance prompted request for additional short-term risk reduction measures.

Drinking Water rules for Lead



- EPA Lead and Copper Rule Revisions:
 - Revisions adopted by EPA in Dec 2021, most provisions don't apply until Oct 2024. Based on public review, EPA plans to adopt "improvements" to the rule by then.
 - National focus on requirement for water systems to complete lead service line inventories by Oct 2024 and to develop plans to replace all lead service lines.
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law appropriates \$15 Billion to Lead Service Line Replacement:
 - \$37.2 Million/yr over 5 years allocated to Oregon.
 - No known lead service lines in Oregon. Funds can be used to assist with inventories.