Home Tip of the Month

In honor of National Healthy Homes Month and our upcoming Achieving Green and Healthy Homes Event, here are some Home Tips revolving around Lead Paint Mitigation.

1. Wipe down flat surfaces, like window sills, with a damp paper towel and throw away the paper towel.

2. Mop smooth floors (using a damp mop) weekly to control dust.

3. If possible, use a vacuum with a HEPA filter or a "higher efficiency" collection bag.

4. Pick up loose paint chips carefully with a paper towel and discard in the trash, then wipe the surface clean with a wet paper towel.

5. Take precautions to avoid creating lead dust when remodeling, renovating or maintaining your home.

6. Test for lead hazards by a lead professional. (Have the soil tested too.)

June is National Healthy Homes Month!

Each June, CCI celebrates Healthy Homes Month alongside the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and many other organizations. According to HUD's press release, "In the U.S. today, people spend close to 90% of their time indoors. National Healthy Homes Month (NHHM), created by HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH), is an outreach campaign designed to help people connect the dots between their health and their home.

This year's overarching theme "Check Your Home; Protect Your Family", was chosen to create awareness of what it means to have a healthy home by educating families of the importance of assessing ones home for potential health hazards; and to empower people to make change in order to create the healthiest home possible for their family." Read more here, and check out CCI's Achieving Healthy Homes event described below to celebrate this important month!
Stakeholders To Participate In Home Energy Affordability For Low-Income Customers Working Group

The Public Utility Commission (PUC) published notice inviting interested stakeholders to participate in the Universal Service Reporting Work Group that was formed based on a Commission staff report-- Home Energy Affordability For Low-Income Customers In Pennsylvania. The report found low-income households, even with the help of utility customer assistance programs, still had a higher energy cost burden-- 8 to 10 percent of income for heating customers-- than those not participating-- 4 percent-- regardless of heating, non-heating or energy type.

The PUC is looking get the Working Group up and running by no later than July 31 and complete its work by December 31.

CCI Presents, "Stepping Up: Achieving Green and Healthy Homes" on June 20 at Phipps Conservatory!

There is only ONE WEEK LEFT to reserve your seat at CCI's Cornerstone Speaker Series Event!

At Stepping Up: Achieving Green and Healthy Homes, we call on government officials, children's health professionals, educators and interested parties throughout the region to connect with national home health leaders as they discuss practices and policies that can effect change and pave the way for lasting improvement.

The event will be held Thursday, June 20 at Phipps Conservatory from 3:30 to 5:50 p.m. Attendance is FREE but you must reserve your seat at getenergysmarter.org/events ASAP! Join CCI and their event Partners, Building Performance Association, Women for a Healthy Environment, Green Building Alliance, NeighborWorks of Western PA, and Healthy Indoors Magazine in this signature event sponsored by The Heinz Endowments.

RSVP on our Facebook Event Page for updates!

Save the date on your calendar now for CCI's next "No Place Like Home" event at ENIX Brewing on August 21
PUC Formally Publishes Procedure For Approving Alternative Utility Rate Proposals

The Public Utility Commission formally published its Implementation Order for Act 58 of 2018, putting in place procedures through which utilities may seek Commission approval of applications establishing alternative rates and rate mechanisms in future base rate proceedings. Act 58 gives the Commission express statutory authority to approve alternative rate mechanisms for electric, natural gas, and water and wastewater utilities, as well as what notices of such ratemaking requests are to be given to customers. One goal of alternative ratemaking for energy utilities is to encourage energy conservation, distributed power and renewable energy.

US Environment Agency Cuts Funding for Kids' Health Studies

The decision of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to cut grant funding to the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health (CCCEH) is one with serious implications. According to a recent article in Nature, "The CCCEH has tracked the lives of hundreds of children in New York City since 1998. Scientists have collected samples of blood, urine and even the air in children's homes, starting when their subjects were in the womb, to tease out the health effects of chemicals and pollutants.

The Center's findings influenced New York City's decision in 2018 to phase out diesel buses, and its staff members teach schools and community groups about the harmful chemicals and pollution that kids encounter each day." The EPA has provided roughly half of CCCEH's funding for two decades - along with a dozen similar facilities, and that funding will run out next month. Read more here.

Partnerships Aim to Make Allegheny Safe from Lead Hazards

According to Allegheny County Health Director, Dr. Karen Hacker, in this recent Pittsburgh Post-Gazette article, partnerships aim to make Allegheny safe from lead hazards.
Dr. Hacker goes on to say, "I tell people if you are moving into a place built before 1978, you can assume there will be lead there," she said. She cited windows, windowsills, doors and porches as the most hazardous sites. Old paint that is not peeling can be sealed to be made safe." One weapon in this fight against lead exposure includes the Lead Safe Allegheny coalition of 16 nonprofits and public agencies.

CCI is a proud coalition member that, this summer, will be doing "pre and post demolition soil testing at land bank demolition site in a pilot project to examine the cost and effectiveness of lead-safe techniques." CCI is also involved in the Lead Safe Homes Program where funding is available to income qualified individuals to implement lead paint remediation. Call 412-586-0672 for lead testing in your home.

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) recently produced a blog post that conducted an analysis that "explored the economics of efficiency and solar for an average existing home." When directly compared, a light energy efficiency retrofit can deliver "a whopping 18.5% return annually..." While initial costs of simultaneous energy efficiency projects and rooftop solar can be overwhelming for some, these two are excellent compliments where "reducing loads with efficiency and then serving remaining loads with solar can maximize cost savings and greenhouse gas reductions." Read more here.