



Comments in support of the inclusion of NSF/ANSI-certified lead-reducing water filters as a covered Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) under New Jersey's Section 1115 Medicaid waiver

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Good morning, members of the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee

My Name is Deandrah Cameron, Policy Manager at New Jersey Future. We believe every New Jerseyan deserves to live in a prosperous, fair economy, thriving communities, and healthy neighborhoods. We promote policies that promote access to clean drinking water Statewide.

New Jersey Future played a pivotal role in crafting the comprehensive New Jersey lead service line replacement statute (P.L. 2021, c. 183), enacted in 2021¹, and is proud that our work, along with that of our partners, demonstrates our collective leadership in long-term solutions on this public health issue. Although New Jersey is at the halfway point of its 10-year goal to replace lead service lines by 2031, we are not halfway done, and some families remain exposed to lead in their drinking water.

While New Jersey's Medicaid program, administered through the NJ FamilyCare Comprehensive Demonstration under Section 1115 of the Social Security Act (approved March 30, 2023, and effective through June 30, 2028)², provides essential reactive measures for lead poisoning, it falls short in preventive interventions that could avert exposure at its source. NJ FamilyCare covers blood lead screenings and medical management *after* a child has been exposed. The state could improve by offering environmental interventions, such as water filters, to prevent exposure and poisoning³.

¹AN ACT concerning the replacement of lead service lines and supplementing Title 58 of the Revised Statutes

https://pub.njleg.gov/bills/2020/PL21/183_.PDF

² DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services 7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop S2-25-26 Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850 State Demonstrations Group <https://www.medicare.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demonstrations/downloads/nj-familycare-comp-demo-apv-l-tech-crcrns-atcmnt-r.pdf>

³ Potential Lead Exposure Mapping (PLEM) in New Jersey

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/bc82aa1d39d54e5d944d701cf7e8450d>

Families are being exposed today! In Essex County alone, where over 100,000 residents rely on Medicaid and 55% of all residents are renters⁴, over 51% of the housing stock predates 1960⁵ While Lead service line replacements are ongoing, many NJ FamilyCare enrollees remain vulnerable in the interim. These families are disproportionately renters in older housing who lack the authority or funds to replace pipes or purchase high-quality filtration. For infants, drinking water can account for up to 60% of lead exposure, and there is no safe level.

Lead poisoning in NJ disproportionately impacts children living in predominantly Black, Brown, and low-income communities. Among the largest municipalities in NJ with the highest percentage of children under 6 with elevated blood lead levels are Trenton, Irvington, East Orange, and Plainfield. These towns all contain majority Black and Brown populations, and the percentage of persons in poverty in these towns ranges from 17.1 to 24.7 percent, well above the state percentage of 9.7 percent⁶.

**Top 10 Large Municipalities Ranked by
Highest Percentage of Children Younger Than Six Years of Age with an EBLL in SFY
2024**

Municipality (County)	% Children < 6 Years with an EBLL
Trenton City (Mercer)	5.1%
Irvington Township (Essex)	4.1%
East Orange City (Essex)	3.1%
South Brunswick Township (Middlesex)	2.9%
Atlantic City (Atlantic)	2.5% (tie with Plainfield City)
Plainfield City (Union)	2.5% (tie with Atlantic City)
Newark City (Essex)	2.4% (tie with Edison Township)
Edison Township (Middlesex)	2.4% (tie with Newark City)
Parsippany-Troy Hills Township (Morris)	2.2% (tie with Jersey City)
Jersey City (Hudson)	2.2% (tie with Parsippany-Troy Hills Township)

Total Children = 2020 U.S. Census for Children 0-6 Years of Age
Percent EBLL = (Total EBLL / Total Screened) * 100

By including coverage for filters under the 1115 waiver, we can empower providers to offer solutions to high-risk households, including those with pregnant persons, G-tube-fed individuals, documented kidney disease, and cardiovascular disease.

⁴ Essex County, New Jersey

https://data.census.gov/profile/Essex_County_New_Jersey?q=050XX00US34013#housing

⁵ American Community Survey B25034Year Structure Built

<https://dat>

⁶ HDPulse: An Ecosystem of Minority Health and Health Disparities Resources. National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. Created 1/24/2025. Available from <https://hdpulse.nimhd.nih.gov>

[a.census.gov/table?q=B25034:+Year+Structure+Built+essex+county+new+jersey](https://data.census.gov/table?q=B25034:+Year+Structure+Built+essex+county+new+jersey)

⁷ CHILDHOOD LEAD EXPOSURE IN NEW JERSEY ANNUAL REPORT STATE FISCAL YEAR 2024(July 1, 2023 – June 30, <https://www.nj.gov/health/childhood-lead/documents/childhood-lead-2024-annual-report.pdf>

[In Cook County, Illinois, the Medicaid-managed CountyCare program successfully distributed filters to thousands of at-risk families](#)⁸. The program demonstrates that this is both operationally feasible and fiscally responsible. Integrating water filtration into Medicaid is a low-cost intervention that will save the state billions in long-term health and educational costs. We must ensure that for New Jersey's most vulnerable children, prevention, not just treatment, is at the center of care.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important matter

⁸ Proactive Filter Program for Medicaid Families
Cook County, IL <https://www.protectkidsfromlead.com/case-studies/cook-county-il>