

early detection + early intervention = healthy bodies + sharp minds

LeadCare[®] II

Improving outcomes from discovery to diagnostics

S u c c e s s S t o r i e s



Point-of-Care Results Improve Screening Rates & Health Outcomes by Leslie Holbrook, medical office manager Cornerstone Pediatrics, Prescott, Arizona

The Arizona Department of Health Services has designated the areas we serve (Prescott, Northwest, and Central Yavapai County) as at high risk for lead poisoning. For the past eight years we have been following the traditional health plan protocol for blood-lead testing, directing our patients to go to a reference lab for the test. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts to encourage parents to take children to the lab for testing, we found that we had near-zero compliance. Already overburdened parents find it difficult to take additional time off from work, or they have transportation issues. They also are loath to subject their children to a venous blood draw, as the laboratory requires.

Lead poisoning is a serious concern. Recent studies have documented neurological effects, speech and hearing problems, hyperactivity, behavior, learning, and other problems with blood-lead levels over five $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$. We at Cornerstone Pediatrics knew that it was very likely that we had lead-poisoned patients that were falling through the cracks of traditional testing methodologies not well suited for our patient population. Consequently, last year, we decided to invest in a blood-lead testing system that allows us to determine the child's blood-lead level in just three minutes with a finger-stick, as recommended by the CDC, which funded the development of the system to reach at-risk children served by practices like ours.

There is no question that point-of-care blood-lead testing is both cost-effective, and improves health outcomes. We are able to do two mandated tests – hemoglobin and blood-lead, using one finger-stick, which is much less traumatic for children, parents, and our staff alike. Since we began offering in-office testing, we have had virtually 100% compliance. We have tested 110 children and identified a number of children with either anemia and/or elevated levels of blood-lead – diagnoses that would have eluded us before. (We have, of note, identified more anemia in this age group in the last several months since starting in-office screening than we had in the previous eight years of laboratory-based testing.)

Beyond improving screening rates dramatically and identifying children who need important follow-up care, we also find that the immediate results help us to empower parents to prevent future lead poisoning. When we give parents the results of their children's tests, we educate them on what they can do with the children's diet and with their home environment so they can help their children thrive. The combination of result and information really helps drive home the health-education message. We also began sending information home with parents to help reinforce what they learned in the office to help their anemic and lead-exposed children.

Located in Prescott, Arizona, Cornerstone Pediatrics is dedicated to providing quality non-surgical care for infants, children, and adolescents (up to the age of 18 years).