



# ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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**Contact:** Amie M. Downs  
412-350-3711 (office)  
412-327-3700 (cell)  
[amie.downs@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:amie.downs@alleghenycounty.us)

## **Fitzgerald Announces Formation of Nine Member Lead Task Force**

**PITTSBURGH** – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald announced today that he has formed a Lead Task Force and charged its members with reviewing county data, examining potential policies, reviewing strategies and literature related to childhood lead exposure in the county and returning a report and recommendations to him within six months. The 9-member task force will be chaired by Dr. Karen Hacker, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department.

“Dr. Hacker’s level of professionalism and expertise make her a great choice to pull together all of the stakeholders as we delve into this issue further,” said Fitzgerald. “Since becoming the Health Department Director in September 2013, she has shepherded a variety of successes that have improved our living conditions here in the county – air quality met the federal standard for ozone for the first time and the 24-hour standard for PM2.5, establishment of the *Live Well Allegheny* program, continued focuses on access to healthy food and health care, decreased infant mortality rates and more. Like she does everything, Dr. Hacker will lead the task force in a thoughtful, deliberate way that ensures public trust and confidence in the science and data that the members consider through this process.”

Specifically, the task force has been charged with the following:

- Review the current literature and speak with experts on sources of lead and the relative risks to the Allegheny County population
- Review available data to determine what we know and don’t know relevant to childhood lead exposure in our county
- Review strategies for assessing the impact of universal lead screening, should the recently-adopted Board of Health regulation become law
- Examine possible policies that protect the public from lead exposure
- Make recommendations for interventions and prevention of lead exposure

A full list of the task force members, along with brief summaries of their backgrounds, follows:

**Patrick Dowd, PhD:** Dr. Dowd is serving as the inaugural executive director of Allies for Children, a child advocacy nonprofit dedicated to being a bold voice for policy changes that improve the lives of children. A former city councilman and school board member, his efforts around coalition-building have focused on academic excellence and accountability. He holds a BA in History from the University of Missouri and a MA and PhD in European Intellectual History from the University of Pittsburgh.

**Councilman Richard Ford:** Richard Ford has served as a member of Council in the City of Clairton for 12 years. As a councilman, he has focused on organizing and promoting community events such as the Clairton Community Day and healthy activities such as a 5K Run and Walk. He is a retired construction electrician for IBEW and a deacon in his church where he participates in a prison ministry.

**Dr. Bernard Goldstein:** Dr. Goldstein is a physician, board-certified in internal medicine and in toxicology. Emeritus Dean and emeritus professor of environmental and occupational health at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, he is active on a variety of community health

issues related to the Gulf oil spill and to unconventional shale gas development. He received his medical degree from New York University and undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin.

**Valerie McDonald Roberts:** Chief Urban Affairs Officer for the City of Pittsburgh, Ms. Roberts oversees all housing, small business and neighborhood development, nonprofit and faith-based initiatives within city government and the community. She has 24 years of diverse governmental experience, and serves on a variety of nonprofit boards and organizations. She holds a BS degree in Medical Technology and MS degree in Forensic Chemistry from the University of Pittsburgh.

**Dr. Deborah Moss, MPH:** Dr. Moss is a pediatrician with extensive experience designing and evaluating interventions to improve the quality of care for underserved populations. She has served as faculty in the Division of General Academic Pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC for the past 20 years, and is pediatric consultant to the UPMC Health Plan. A graduate of Northwestern University Medical School, she also holds a master's degree in public health from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health.

**Dr. Amy G Nevin:** Dr. Nevin currently works in conjunction with Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, investigating methodologies to improve communication between doctors and social service agencies, and teaching to support Department of Human Services caseworkers' understanding of medical topics. Previously, she served as the first pediatrician at Hilltop Community Healthcare Center, a federally-qualified health center in Beltzhoover. She earned her undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and taught junior high math and science before attend the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine.

**Jeanne VanBriesen, P.E.:** The Duquesne Light Company Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Director of the Center for Water Quality in Urban Environmental Systems (Water QUEST) at Carnegie Mellon University, Professor VanBriesen's research is in environmental systems. Specifically, it has included biotransformation of recalcitrant organics, detection of biological agents in drinking water and natural water systems, speciation-driven biogeochemistry of chelating agents and disinfection by-products, and impacts of energy extraction. A current member of the U.S. EPA Science Advisory Board, she holds a BS in Education and a MS and PhD in Civil Engineering from Northwestern University. She is also a licensed professional engineer in Delaware.

**Dr. Sharon Watkins:** Dr. Watkins is the Chief Epidemiologist at the Pennsylvania Department of Health, having joined the department in November 2015. She is the director for the Bureau of Epidemiology and is responsible for the management and oversight of the bureau which includes the Division of Infectious Disease, Environmental Health, and Community Health. Dr. Watkins is a graduate of Ohio State University and specialized in epidemiology, environmental epidemiology and perinatal/maternal and child epidemiology.

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**Office of County Executive Rich Fitzgerald**  
101 Courthouse | 436 Grant Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Phone: 412-350-6500 | Fax: 412-350-6512  
[www.alleghenycounty.us](http://www.alleghenycounty.us)

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