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UNIVERSITY of
ROCHESTER
MEDICAL CENTER

MEDICINE of THE HIGHEST ORDER

October 7, 2008

The Honorable David Paterson
Governor, New York State
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

I urge you to sign the Childhood Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention and Safe Housing Act (A.6399/S.6350). This important legislation takes significant steps to help protect children throughout New York State from the dangers of lead poisoning and works to provide housing that is safe from environmental hazards.

This bill provides a statutory framework for a statewide prevention plan to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in the state through primary prevention measures that include financial assistance to landlords and homeowners for lead-based paint hazard remediation, screening of persons at risk of lead poisoning and public awareness and education. This legislation focuses on prevention efforts where they are most needed, as determined by Department of Health data, and can be used in the future as a model for other locations in our state.

Lead poisoning remains at crisis levels in many neighborhoods in the City of Rochester and in cities across New York. Unfortunately, this problem disproportionately affects low income, urban, and minority children. We need to protect children from environmental health hazards by identifying these hazards and taking corrective and preventive action before harm occurs.

The University of Rochester Medical Center continues to be actively involved in supporting community efforts to address childhood lead poisoning. One such lead prevention effort is the Healthy Home program. The Healthy Home program was created through community partnerships almost two years ago, coinciding with the new Rochester lead law, in order to meet the increased need for education of residents, property owners, community groups, and professionals. One of the most commonly identified risks by Healthy Home visitors is lead hazards. Unfortunately, without passage of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention and Safe Housing Act, few of these visitors will have the financial resources to address the concerns identified during their visit to the Healthy Home.

While progress has been made, this remains a priority concern for the University of Rochester Medical Center as part of our commitment to improving community health. I urge you to sign this critical legislation. Thank you for your efforts to protect children in our state from environmental hazards.

Sincerely,

Bradford C. Berk, M.D., Ph.D.

cc: Assemblyman David Gantt
Senator Joseph Robach

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