# TESTIMONY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

## HOUSE BILL 4936

**June 21, 2007**

Good Morning. My name is Joan Dyer, and I am program supervisor at the Kent County Health Department, where I am responsible for the county's lead poisoning prevention program. I am also a Commissioner of the Michigan Childhood Lead Poisoning and Prevention Commission. On the Commission, I represent *Get the Lead Out!*, a 22-organization collaborative with a mission to end lead poisoning in Kent County.

I am here today to urge you to pass HB 4936, in order to allow this important Commission to continue.

Michigan has a serious, ongoing problem with childhood lead poisoning, and currently ranks as the 6th worst state in the percentage of young children who are lead poisoned. Many, many people have been working to improve this situation. In 2004, the Task Force to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning, of which I was also a member, comprised of more than 170 people organized into six committees, produced a final report with more than 100 recommendations.

Michigan's legislature took the Task Force report seriously, and passed a comprehensive package of laws to address many of the recommendations of the Task Force. One effort created the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Commission, with the charge to evaluate and coordinate lead resources and activities across the state.

The Commission has provided a very effective means of assessing the performance of government and private sector lead poisoning efforts, and of identifying remaining gaps and problems within and across many agencies, as only an external, independent body can. We provided annual reports in March 2006 and March 2007, and are completing an aggressive, innovative set of long-term recommendations that we will issue by the end of the month.

The Commission's authorizing legislation requires that it sunset on July 1, 2007. My fellow Commissioners and I strongly believe that if the Commission sunsets, momentum to eliminate the lead hazards in homes and to test ALL children at high risk for lead poisoning will falter. If the Commission sunsets now, children will continue to be poisoned in the same homes that have poisoned others in the past, and children who should be tested and treated for lead exposure will go untested and untreated.

Lead poisoning is completely preventable. Each case of childhood lead poisoning is estimated to cost at least $45,000 in medical, special education, and other services required by the child. The Commission has much more to contribute to permanently eliminating lead poisoning in Michigan's children. We ask that you join us in our mission to end childhood lead poisoning and enable us to finish what we have started.

Thank you.