CDC can no longer help prevent lead poisoning in children, state officials say

While Milwaukee continues to struggle, a Stat report Friday hints at losses yet to come. Looking back at the national scandal of lead-contaminated apple-sauce pouches, Stat reported that at least six of the CDC scientists and experts who worked on that nationwide poisoning event are gone.

The poisonings were first revealed in cases in Hickory, North Carolina, where officials relied on help from the CDC to track down the source. The CDC's investigation subsequently identified 566 lead-poisoned children across 44 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, DC, and helped get the tainted applesauce off shelves, Stat noted.

If the poisonings had happened now, "we wouldn't have been able to do the broad outreach to tell all the state lead programs to look out for this, and we wouldn't have been able to measure the impact because CDC is the one that does that across state lines," one laid-off CDC worker told the outlet.

Further, the CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program is what funded the three North Carolina epidemiologists who collect and process lead-testing data. The funding runs out in October, and with the program now wiped out, it's unclear what will happen.

"It's hard to sleep through the night," Ed Norman, head of the children's environmental health unit at North Carolina's health department, told Stat. He tried asking CDC staff what happens after October, but everyone he had been in touch with

is gone.

https://arstechnica.com/health/2025/05/cdc-can-no-longer-help-prevent-lead-poisoning-in-children-state-officials-say/