

Summary of Major Points from the Lead Data Dialogue

Dan Fiorino, May 12, 2017

Data Gaps and Needs

1. There is a need for better integration of lead in drinking water data with other sources of data on lead exposure as a way of targeting risks and developing effective mitigation and prevention strategies.
2. Although the development and deployment of new technologies is not the entire answer to lead in drinking water data gaps, it is central to finding the answers.
3. Lead data practices and technologies should be guided by which of many objectives are sought: corrosion control, diagnosing potentially high risks; identifying priorities service line replacement; informing citizens and homeowners/purchasers/renters, and so on.
4. Both monitoring at the tap and of service lines are necessary and play a role in reducing exposures and risks. The key is to define objectives and link monitoring strategies.
5. Issues for which information is lacking at a policy level include: use of information disclosure as a policy tool; the multiple drivers that exist for stimulating improvements in monitoring technologies and practices; ways of communicating better with the public regarding the need for and results of monitoring; and financing mechanisms being used.
6. Clear overlaps exist of lead in water with children's health and environmental justice.

Technologies and Practices for Scale-Up or Analysis

1. Innovations in lead service line identification may be on the horizon and will contribute to a more efficient use of resources and a better targeting of risks. Are there ways to stimulate innovation?
2. Citizen science options warrant further study and application, but be aware of the limits.
3. The concept of data fusion could be applied to developing more integrated strategies and linking technology, best practices, and more holistic lead reduction strategies.
4. Examine options for linking existing data sources (e.g., pediatric sources or CMS data).
5. Further analysis of the various drivers for innovative technologies and practices would help to inform lead strategies and monitoring and ways of stimulating innovation.
6. The nutrient challenge project may offer a model for stimulating technology innovation.

Issues and Actions for Follow-Up

1. Prepare an analysis of the drivers for improved monitoring: business, health, customers, and so on. Begin with reviewing the soon-to-be-released Aspen Institute report.
2. Assess the relevance of the concept of data fusion and its application to lead strategies.
3. Identify best practices and disseminate case studies.
4. Assess the applicability of a market stimulation model to lead monitoring technologies.
5. Prepare an analysis of information disclosure as a tool for citizens, homeowners, and others to take action to reduce risks: starting with lead service line detection.
6. Identify funding sources for further work and how to complement existing efforts.
7. Document financing mechanisms that are being used to pay for replacing premise plumbing lead service lines.