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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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October 31, 2008

Atlantic City Medical Center,  
Mainland Divisions

Cape Regional Medical Center

Cooper Health System

Deborah Heart and Lung Center

Kennedy Health Systems,  
Washington Township Campus

Lourdes Medical Center  
of Burlington County

Our Lady of Lourdes  
Medical Center

Shore Memorial Hospital

South Jersey Healthcare-  
Elmer Hospital

South Jersey Healthcare-  
Regional Medical Center

The Memorial Hospital  
of Salem County

Underwood-Memorial Hospital

Virtua Memorial Hospital  
Burlington County

Virtua West Jersey Hospital  
Voorhees

### RENOVATING? IS YOUR HOME LEAD-SAFE? Free Classes For NJ Residents: November 10, 14, 17

Almost 175,000 NJ families live in a home with hazardous levels of lead. Many do not even know they are at risk, and the effects of lead poisoning are often unseen until the damage has been done.

As the state has tightened housing regulations to combat this threat, many people—contractors, building professionals, landlords, and do-it-yourself-homeowners—must be educated on lead-safe home renovation techniques.

In the month of November, three free lead safety courses will be held in South Jersey, on November 10, 14, and 17. Entitled “**Lead-Safe Building Maintenance Practices**,” these conferences are sponsored by the **Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative** with support from the **NJ Department of Community Affairs/Lead Outreach and Education Program**.

“**Lead-Safe Building Maintenance Practices**” delivers a free, one-day training seminar for property owners, homeowners, and contractors. The instruction is conducted by qualified lead safety educators. Classes are HUD-approved, and can help attendees meet some mandatory state property maintenance code requirements. Lunch and continental breakfast are included.

The chief source of childhood lead poisoning is invisible lead dust, which comes from peeling or deteriorated paint. Any home built before 1978—when lead-based paint was banned—probably has lead dust.

“Lead dust can be spread around by stripping paint, remodeling walls, and other general contracting work,” says Debi Asselta, RN, Coordinator of the **Southern Regional Lead Poisoning Prevention Coalition**.

“These classes are a valuable resource for anyone who deals with maintenance, home repair, or property renovation.”

(cont'd)

The courses will be held throughout the month of November on the following dates and at the following times:

**November 10, 2008**  
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Lourdes Medical Center  
218 Sunset Road  
Willingboro, NJ 08046

**November 14, 2008**  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Tri-County Community Action Partnership  
Marino Ballroom  
110 Cohansey Street  
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

**November 17, 2008**  
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Cape May Regional Medical Center  
Conference Room A  
2 Stone Harbor Boulevard  
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210

To register for the conferences, or for additional information about lead safety, call **1-888-722-2903** (856-451-6330, x382 for the Nov. 14 date). Online registration is available at **snjpc.org** (click on the “Lead Safe Building Practices” link).

The market for home improvement is near its all-time high. In 2005, Americans spent a record \$280 billion on remodeling and renovation, according to the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. With home prices falling and the economy tightening, homeowners are forecasted to continue investing in renovation projects.

“The problem isn’t going to go away on its own,” says Asselta. “Education and prevention are the best tools we have for solving it.”

Lead poisoning attacks the brain and nervous systems, inflicting permanent brain damage for lead-exposed children. Kids can develop serious behavior and learning problems that can lead to dropping out of school, trouble with the law, and difficulty achieving their full career earning potential. Lead is also dangerous for the unborn child of a pregnant woman living in a contaminated home.

“Even a tiny amount of lead has long-lasting consequences for children and pregnant women,” says Asselta. “Lead safety is everyone’s responsibility.”

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*The Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative (SNJPC) is the state-licensed, non-profit, maternal-child health consortium serving the seven southernmost counties of New Jersey. SNJPC programs and services are dedicated to improving health outcomes for mothers and babies in South Jersey. For more information about the Cooperative or its services, call 856-665-6000 or visit [www.snjpc.org](http://www.snjpc.org).*