Engaging the Community for Newark’s LSL Replacement Program

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Overview

- Background
- Newark’s LSL Replacement Program Evolution
- Role of Community Organizations
- Strategies for Effective Communication on Lead
Background
City of Newark, NJ

- 300,000 customers
- 60 million gallons per day
- Approximately 20,000 LSLs
- Two supplies with different corrosion control treatment (CCT)
  - Pequannock: sodium silicate (now zinc orthophosphate)
  - Wanaque: zinc orthophosphate
What Happened?

- Return to standard monitoring in 2017
- LAL Exceedance – Isolated to Pequannock
- pH decreased for DBP simultaneous compliance (but silica maintained)
- Plattnerite (tetravalent lead) protective scale not maintained at lower pH
- Scale sloughing off pipe
Public Health Aspects

- **Action**
  - *Immediate* point-of-use filter distribution
  - LSL Replacement Program
  - Corrosion control treatment design
HOW NEWARK GOT LEAD IN ITS WATER, AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE REST OF AMERICA

A Water Crisis in Newark Brings New Worries

Elevated lead levels found in drinking water of Pequannock homes

NEWARK, N.J., ADDS ORTHOPHOSPHATES TO COMBAT HIGH LEAD LEVELS

Orthophosphates are being added to a New Jersey drinking water system to combat lead levels.

Newark's $75M Solution For Water Woes Moves Forward

About 15,000 Newark homes need to replace their lead service lines. The effort may take eight years and cost $75 million, officials say.

The lead in Newark’s drinking water has hit a ‘jaw dropping’ high level, tests show.
Newark’s LSL Replacement Program Evolution
Customer’s Own Entire LSL
Newark LSLRP Timeline & Legislative Impact

- **NJ Legislation**: removed services with public funds (June 2018)
- **LSLRP Commercials**: 8 year program (March 2019)
- **Special Tax Assessment Ordinance**: (February 2019)
- **POU Filter Scare**: Bottled Water (August 2019)
- **LSLRP Ramps up**: 3 year program (September 2019)
- **Ordinance**: mandatory & no direct cost LSLRs (September 2019)
- **Residents provide access**: (September 2019)
- **80-100 LSLRs/day**
- **Since COVID**: 40-60 LSLRs/day
Newark’s LSLR Program Summary

- $120M over 3 years (grants and low interest loans from State; Port Authority settlement)
- Full LSLRs only - $6,000-$7,000/service
- No cost to homeowner
- Free water testing with materials inspection
- Post-replacement testing
Newark knows the only permanent solution is to remove the lead

Newark's Lead Service Line Replacement Program Replaces 10,000 Lines in 13 Months
As part of new COVID-19 precautions, distribution of water filters, replacement cartridges, and bottled water is available by appointment only. Please call your preferred location to schedule a pick-up time.

Lead Service Line Replacement Program

The largest opportunity to reduce the risk of exposure to lead in drinking water is to remove the lead service line that brings water to your home from the water main in the street. The City of Newark has initiated a Lead Service Replacement Program that will replace approximately 18,000 lead service lines over the next 24 to 30 months.

Lead service lines replaced to-date

14,283
14 MIDLAND PL

**Water Sampling:**
A stagnated water sample was collected from this home on June 4, 2020 with a result of 3.78 ppb of lead which is below the USEPA Lead Action Level of 15 ppb.

**Program Status:**
Lead service line replacement was completed for this residence on November 22, 2019 under Contract 20 by Montana Construction.

**Water Filters:**
The city recommends that you continue to use a filter because you may have lead plumbing elements inside your home. Contact the Water & Sewer Department at 973-733-6303 or 973-733-6370 or waterandsewer@ci.newark.nj.us for more information.

**Bottled Water:**
Bottled water distribution at recreation centers has ended. Pregnant women and families with children under six years of age can still pick up at two locations. Learn more...
Post-Replacement Sampling

- Communication doesn’t end with replacement
- Confirmation = consumer confidence
- 2,200 sample kits have been returned and analyzed
- Follow-up investigation if >15 ppb
Role of Community Organizations
Newark’s Story: From blunderer to shining star
Use Trusted Messengers

- Public is often suspicious!
- Distrustful of people who didn’t protect them
- Utilities and city officials are not always best communicators

Supplement by training trusted messengers in community to engage public:

- Community Leaders
- Neighborhood or Civic Groups
- Religious Centers
- Service Providers
- Leadership Youth Groups
- Neighbor to neighbor canvassing
- Block Associations
- Childcare or After School Providers
Clean Water Action

- Independent Grassroots based organization
- Lead Organizer resided in the community for over 50 years
- Credible Voice for community engagement
- Trusted messenger of issues/solutions
- A voice of the voiceless
- National Leader on Water
Strategies for Effective Communication on Lead
Key Elements to Good Communication

- Honesty is the best policy!
- Action Oriented with clear timelines
- Consistent Message
- Make Materials and Format Inviting to Read
- Easy to Access and Use
- Use Trusted Messengers
Honesty is the Best Policy

- Truthful
- Transparent
- Timely disclosure
- If you don’t know, say so!
- Don’t say it’s safe if you don’t know it’s safe
- Only promise what you can deliver

“I’m not an expert on body language, but I get the feeling you’re not being totally honest with me.”
Action Oriented Communication

- Define problem
- Tell public what the remedy is
- What utility will do & by when
- What public can do to be part of solution
Newark Door Hanger

**Lead source**

**Health issue**

**Remedy Utility & You**
- Line Replacement
- Filter Use Distribute
- Multiple ways to sign up
Newark Lawn Signs

- Calling on residents to sign up for lead service line replacements
- Once replaced, post a lawn sign announcing line replaced to encourage others
Consistent Message

- Use same catchy slogan, logo etc.
- Make sure info/instructions are uniform
- Can be communicated easily by others
- Include multilingual communication
LONG-TERM PROGRAM OFFICIALLY BREAKS GROUND TO ELIMINATE LEAD SERVICE LINES

Standing in the front yard of a North Ward home, Mayor Ras Baraka joined numerous officials on March 13, 2019, for the groundbreaking of a long-term program to eliminate lead service lines. The program aims to replace lead service lines with copper lines in homes and businesses.

37,000 filters distributed and counting
ONGOING

Home lead line replacements underway
MARCH 13, 2019

Major water treatment plant upgrades operational
MAY 7, 2019

Lead levels expected to drop
END OF 2019
Take Back The Tap!
Let the Water Run.
Vary methods & increase frequency to get response

- Handouts
- Website
- Public displays
- Social media
- Phone or text alert system Events
- Ad – print, radio, TV, Cable, buses, transit shelters
- Demonstrations

- Sustain and adjust as needed
Contact Us

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