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**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST BERWYN PROPERTY OWNER OVER LEAD PAINT HAZARDS*****Madigan Also Files Order to Ensure Apartment is Vacant While Lead Paint is Addressed***

**Chicago** —Attorney General Lisa Madigan filed a lawsuit Thursday against a suburban property owner for violating the Lead Poisoning Prevention Act by failing to fix cracked and peeling lead paint in a Berwyn apartment building after a young child living there tested for high levels of lead exposure.

Madigan filed the lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court against Patricia Groves, the owner and landlord of an apartment building located at 1817 S. Grove Ave. in Berwyn, Ill. According to Madigan's complaint, a lead test was conducted in a second-floor apartment of Groves' building after a child under the age of six living in the apartment showed elevated levels of lead in a blood test. A lead test conducted by the Cook County Department of Public Health confirmed the presence of lead paint in the apartment.

After being notified of the contamination, Madigan alleged Groves failed to hire a licensed lead abatement contractor and take steps to address the hazard. In conjunction with her lawsuit, Madigan also obtained an agreed interim order that will ensure the apartment remains empty until the owner addresses the lead hazards and receives clearance from the Cook County Department of Public Health to begin accepting tenants. The order also requires Groves to post notice of the lead hazard at all entrances of the building.

"There's no reason any child should be exposed to lead paint, but the unfortunate reality is that it remains an ongoing concern and poses very serious health risks," Madigan said. "This lawsuit will ensure that this defendant immediately addresses the lead paint hazard in her building."

Illinois has one of the highest lead poisoning rates in the nation, with particularly high rates among minority children. Madigan has led many efforts to prevent lead exposure in children across the state, including Senate Bill 550, which passed the Senate in May. The legislation would require Illinois schools with grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade that were constructed before 1987 and receive water from a community water supply to test drinking water for lead. The legislation would also increase public notification nearby construction projects that could impact water lines and increase the presence of lead in water, and require an inventory be taken of all lead service lines in the state that pose the risk of increased lead exposure in drinking water. Madigan is urging the House to pass the measure, particularly in light of recent tests showing high lead levels in Chicago Public Schools, Glenview School District 34 and Galesburg facilities.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, lead paint is common in many homes built before 1978, when the federal government banned paint containing lead. Lead paint usually poses a hazard when it is old, cracked and flaking off or emitting dust particles, and it should be remediated immediately.

The case was referred to Madigan's office by the Cook County Department of Public Health. Assistant Attorneys General Gerald Karr and Angad Nagra are handling the case for Madigan's Environmental Bureau.

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