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## Slaughter tours Rochester's Healthy Home today

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U.S. Rep Louise Slaughter this morning toured Rochester's Healthy Home, a hands-on museum designed to educate the community about home health risks, such as lead poisoning.

Slaughter, D-Fairport, said though the number of children in Monroe County with high levels of lead paint in their systems has declined in recent years, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

And because people don't always know how to deal with lead, chemicals and other hazards in their homes, Slaughter suggested they stop by the Healthy Home, 700 W. Main St., where they can learn how to diminish hazards such as dust mites, mold and lead paint and dust. The house, which opened in 2006, is a joint project by the University of Rochester Medical Center and the Southwest Area Neighborhood Association and is open Wednesday afternoons and by appointment.

Lead-based paint is found in homes built before 1978. As old paint deteriorates, lead in paint dust can poison children, especially those younger than 6 who breathe the dust or eat paint chips. Lead poisoning can damage children's central nervous systems, hurting cognitive and behavioral development and limiting their growth and ability to learn. The damage is irreversible.

Rochester's City Council adopted code amendments in December 2005, adding lead-based paint hazards to city inspectors' checklist for older rental housing. Although lead was banned from house paint in 1978 it remains in thousands of Rochester homes and poses health risks, particularly to children. The new regulations took effect July 1, 2006.

"I'm really happy to see what is happening here," she said. "It's a serious problem."

Healthy Home Intern Dekontee Richards, 15, of Rochester said she thought hands-on activities at the home are a great way for children to learn how some simple household items, like cleaning supplies, can affect their families and what can be done to remove the hazard.

"You're never too young to take action," she said.

Last month, Slaughter and Sen. Barack Obama, D-Illinois, introduced legislation targeting lead hazards in the home-based child care centers. The bill, which encompasses Head Start program locations and kindergarten classrooms, sets a goal to be lead-safe within five years.

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