United States Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Michigan

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PRESS RELEASE

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FORMER DETROIT LEAD INSPECTOR INDICTED

Former City of Detroit Health Department lead inspector Donald M. Patterson, age 49, was indicted by a federal grand jury in Detroit on charges of soliciting bribes, wire fraud, and making false statements concerning lead inspections, United States Attorney Barbara L. McQuade announced today.

McQuade was joined in the announcement by Carol Paszkiewicz, EPA , and Andrew Arena, FBI Special Agent in Charge.

The four count indictment charges that as a result of his position as a lead inspector, Patterson would become aware of homes in the City of Detroit in which children had been identified with unsafe blood lead levels. His job was to ensure that all paint-based lead hazards were safely removed from those homes. Instead, on several occasions, Patterson used his position to obtain cash from the owners or the renters of these homes, in exchange for his falsely certifying that the homes were free of lead, or in exchange for his fraudulently pretending to provide instruction on how to safely remove the lead-based paint. In particular, the indictment charges that between October, 2008, and August, 2009, Patterson demanded $1350 in connection with fraudulent abatement of lead hazards to which children were being exposed at four separate properties.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case was investigated by special agents of the Environmental Protection Agency and FBI, with assistance from the City of Detroit and the State of Michigan. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lynn Helland.