

GALVESTON COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

Protecting and Promoting the Optimal Health and Well-Being of Galveston County

Zach Davidson
Chairman, United Board of Health



Philip Keiser, MD
Local Health Authority
Chief Executive Officer

“The Children Center”, located at 1424 45th St Galveston TX is a short-term transitional housing center providing shelter to vulnerable children and families. The center occupies 5 buildings, three of which house residents.

A recent investigation of lead exposure in a child residing there discovered widespread unsanitary conditions, including evidence of bed bugs, roaches, rat infestation and rat droppings. The rat droppings were extensive and were found in living areas, kitchens, and bedrooms. The water heater was covered with rat droppings potentially contaminating the water supply. There were even fresh rat droppings on a baby’s bed.

Rats in Galveston are known to harbor multiple diseases including Typhus, an infection that causes serious illness and death. The extent of the rat infestation and the widespread rat feces represent a clear risk to life and health of all the residents of this facility.

In addition to the contagion in the building, measurement of lead both in and outside the facility revealed levels far above federal and state standards that has resulted in lead poisoning in at least 3 children;

Based on these findings, I, Philip Keiser MD, Local Health Authority of the County of Galveston, have the reasonable belief that continued occupancy of this facility poses an immediate threat to the life and health of residents of the Children Center through exposure through infectious agents and through continued lead poisoning. Pursuant to Texas Health & Safety Code § 81.084, I hereby issue this Order upon The Children’s Center in Galveston Texas:

1. Within 72 hours of receiving this order, remove all residents from this facility and place them in alternative safe housing.
2. Upon placement of residents in alternative housing, provide the Galveston County Health District with the location and contact information for each resident.
3. Immediate inform all relevant authorities including, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, The State of Texas Department of Health and Human Service and City of Galveston Code enforcement.
4. Develop a mitigation plan cleaning and maintaining the facility for submission and approval by the Galveston County Health District.

In accordance with this Order, you are hereby ordered to authorize entry to and submit The Children’s Center to investigation of the Local Health Authority and his designees. The facility’s property and parcels may not be moved, caused to move, or allowed to move from their current location until subsequent authorization is received from the Local Health Authority.

Additional information regarding any technically feasible control measures to be implemented as a result of this investigation will be provided to you in a timely manner.

Until further notice, the aforementioned stipulations shall remain in effect.

If you have any questions, information, or concerns regarding details of this Order, please contact the Galveston County Health District at 409-938-2492.

Failure to abide by this Order and further instructions from the Local Health Authority may result in criminal penalties ranging from a Class B misdemeanor to a felony in the third degree.

This Order is issued under my authority as the Local Health Authority for the County of Galveston on this the 6th day of April 2023



Philip Keiser, MD
Local Health Authority and CEO
Galveston County Health District



Date