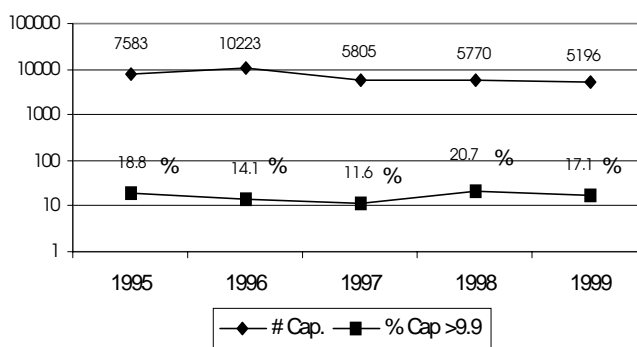


Focus on Environmental Health

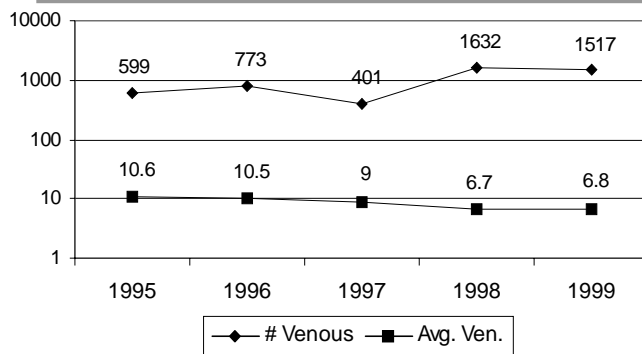
The Community HealthWatch report cards are developed by the Kent County Health Department to report on the status of health priorities being monitored in the Kent County community. This report card focuses on environmental health. Lead poisoning is the leading childhood environmental health hazard. Older homes in poor condition are one of the leading sources of childhood lead exposure, though any home built prior to 1978 - the year lead-based paint was outlawed - may contain lead paint. The Health Department's Childhood Lead Primary Prevention Program seeks to identify and reduce lead hazards in the community by screening children for elevated blood lead levels, and by requiring housing-related lead hazards to be repaired. Lead reduction activities have resulted in declines in both the number of Kent County children with elevated blood lead levels, and the number of housing-related lead hazards.

Capillary Blood Lead Tests



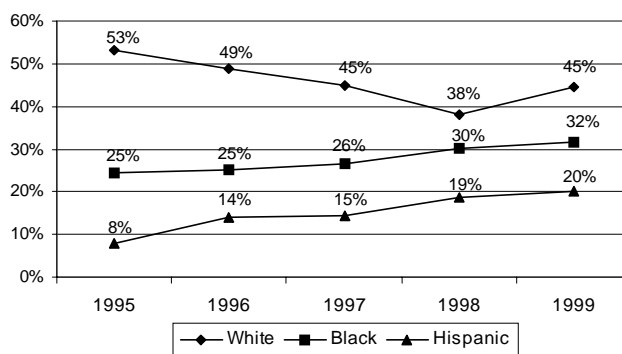
Capillary blood lead tests are used to identify children with elevated blood lead levels. In 1997, Health Department lead screening efforts were targeted to those children living in high-risk areas with older housing stock, leading to a decline in the total number of children screened. The percentage of children identified with elevated blood lead levels has remained relatively stable suggesting that targeted screening effectively reaches at-risk children.

Venous Blood Lead Tests



Venous blood lead tests are more specific tests given to children whose capillary tests show elevated blood lead levels. Since 1997, when targeted testing began, the number of children receiving venous blood lead tests has increased. However, the level of blood lead among children tested (shown here since 1995) has steadily decreased suggesting that prevention efforts have been effective in reducing lead hazards in the community.

Lead Testing by Race/Ethnicity



The over-representation of **African American** and **Hispanic** children tested for lead, especially since 1997, points to socioeconomic disparities among those populations and whites in Kent County. Minority populations are more likely to live in older, high-risk housing, and therefore, more likely to be affected by lead.