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October 14, 2014

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**Health Department offers FREE radon test kits during Radon Action Week**

Exposure to a dangerous, odorless, invisible gas – radon – ranks as the number one in-home hazard for Americans, according to a recent Harvard University study. Radon is a naturally-occurring, radioactive gas that disperses in open air, but can become a serious threat when trapped in a home or other building. Hazardous radon levels are detected in one out of 15 American homes, and radon is the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers.

To commemorate **Radon Action Week, October 20-26**, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is offering radon test kits – which normally cost \$15 – for **FREE**, to encourage Northern Michigan families to check for and eliminate this silent killer from their homes. Test kits can be picked up during regular business hours at Health Department offices in Bellaire, Charlevoix, Petoskey/Harbor Springs and Gaylord. A Property Tax ID number must be provided, to help map radon levels in the four-county Health District.

According to Scott Kendzierski, the Health Department’s Director of Environmental Health Services, testing is the only way to know if you and your family are being exposed to dangerous levels of radon.

“Fortunately, testing for radon is easy and inexpensive,” he said. “If you discover that your home does have a problem, the Health Department can provide free consultation and, if needed, help you find a contractor to correct the problem.”

Kendzierski says radon mitigation systems are readily available through local contractors and are widely used, with excellent results that can decrease the presence of radon in a home by as much as 99 percent. Depending on the size and type of home, systems can range from a few hundred dollars up to about \$2,500.

“It’s reassuring to know that exposure to harmful levels of radon is preventable, and correcting the problem is relatively easy and inexpensive for most homes,” he added.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For additional information about radon or radon testing, visit [www.nwhealth.org/radon.html](http://www.nwhealth.org/radon.html).