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CONTACT:
Mike Swain
(231) 489-4275
m.swain@nwhealth.org



www.nwhealth.org

Health Department to Offer Free Radon Test Kits October 24-28

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

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is recognizing October 24-28 as Radon Action Week by encouraging every resident of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties to test for radon. During that week only, the Health Department will offer radon test kits – which normally cost \$15 – for free, to encourage residents 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 across the region. In 2015, over 650 test kits were distributed by the Health Department during Radon Action Week.

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 simple for most homes," he added.

Radon Test Kits can be picked up at our following locations:

Health Department of Northwest Michigan
209 Portage Dr.
Bellaire, MI 49615

Health Department of Northwest Michigan
220 W. Garfield Ave.
Charlevoix, MI 49720

Health Department of Northwest Michigan
95 Livingston Blvd.
Gaylord, MI 49735

Health Department of Northwest Michigan
3434 M-119, Suite A
Harbor Springs, MI 49740

Call (800) 432-4121 or visit www.nwhealth.org for more information about radon and radon testing. 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.