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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WASHTENAW COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTIGATES  
FOODBORNE ILLNESS OUTBREAK**

YPSILANTI, Mich., April 19, 2010 — Washtenaw County Public Health is actively investigating an outbreak of food-related illness, probably caused by E. coli. Ten cases have been reported to Public Health. Other probable cases are under investigation. Symptoms include abdominal cramping followed by diarrhea that progressively worsens and is often bloody. Ill persons have not experienced fever. Anyone with similar symptoms should seek medical attention. Individuals are also asked to report suspected E. coli illness to Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.

“We are in the early stages of our investigation,” says Dr. Diana Torres-Burgos, MD, MPH, Medical Director for Washtenaw County Public Health, “and we are doing everything we can to identify probable cases and to prevent any additional illness.” We are still working to determine the full scope of the outbreak and to identify the specific strain of bacteria responsible, she continued.

Escherichia coli (E. coli) bacteria are found in the intestines of healthy people and animals. There are many strains of E. coli, and some may cause serious illness. In Washtenaw County, approximately six cases are reported to Public Health annually. Most persons sickened with E. coli recover within a week; however, some infections can be serious.

Proper hand washing, food handling and cooking are critical to preventing the spread of foodborne illness. The Washtenaw County Public Health Fact Sheet on E. coli is available at:  
[http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public\\_health/phcontent/cd\\_fact\\_sheets/ecoli.pdf](http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public_health/phcontent/cd_fact_sheets/ecoli.pdf)

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