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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MICHIGAN CELEBRATES NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

Washtenaw County Public Health Officials Urge Residents to Prepare for Emergencies

YPSILANTI, Mich., April 16, 2007—Washtenaw County Public Health Department officials today announced the start of National Public Health Week—celebrated in Michigan during the week of April 16-20—and urged residents to prepare themselves to stay safe in the event of an emergency. In recognition of the week-long observance, the Washtenaw County Health Department is offering free emergency preparedness handbooks—printed in English and Spanish—to county residents interested in preparing emergency plans and kits for their families. Emergency preparedness handbooks and other related resources will be available for the asking at all city, village, township and government offices within Washtenaw County beginning Tuesday, April 17.

“According to our research, most Americans are not prepared for a public health crisis,” said Ellen Clement, Health Officer at the Washtenaw County Public Health Department. “The next natural disaster, major storm, or disease outbreak would likely disrupt basic services, leaving people without electricity, water, food or needed medications. While it’s not pleasant to think about, we all need to be prepared for such events. The electrical blackout we all experienced just a few short years ago underscored the fact that emergencies can and do happen. We greatly appreciate those governmental units who have agreed to partner with us to get this important information into the hands of county residents,” she said.

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Communicable Disease

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Administration

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Public Health

HEARING IMPAIRED: (734) 994-1733



WEB ADDRESSES: <http://www.ewashtenaw.org>

<http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>

Cindra James, Washtenaw County Public Health Preparedness Coordinator, concurred. “Most people associate emergencies with natural disasters such as snowstorms, thunderstorms, tornadoes and floods,” she said. “These are certainly emergencies we can and should prepare for. However, residents should also plan for less likely events, such as an influenza pandemic, nuclear power plant emergencies, or acts of terrorism. A family’s safety may depend on decisions made in just a few seconds, so it’s wise to think about these things ahead of time by preparing a family emergency plan and kit.”

At a minimum, family emergency planning should include a communication plan, a home safety plan, an evacuation plan, an emergency kit, and a first-aid kit. Since each family is different, emergency plans should address the special needs of infants and young children, older people, pets, and family members with disabilities.

Additional emergency preparedness information is available at the Washtenaw County Public Health Department website: <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>. The site includes a *Prepare Your Family* fact sheet and links to the following county, state and national emergency preparedness resources:

- **Washtenaw County Public Health Emergency Preparedness:**

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public_health/ph_hltindex.html/emergency_preparedness/index_html

- **Washtenaw County Emergency Management:**

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/emergency_management/?qlink

- **Michigan Prepares:**

<http://www.michigan.gov/michiganprepares>

- **The American Red Cross:**

<http://www.prepare.org/>

- **Department of Homeland Security:**

<http://www.ready.gov/>

Upon request, certified emergency preparedness personnel from the Washtenaw County Public Health Department are available to speak, advise, and consult with civic groups regarding emergency preparedness topics. Please contact Cindra James at 734-544-2979 for additional information.

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